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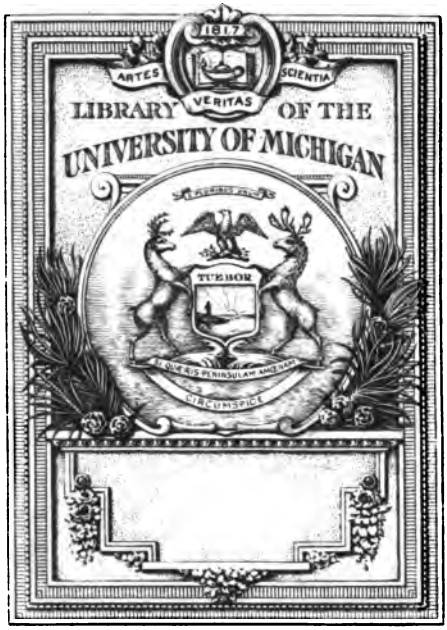
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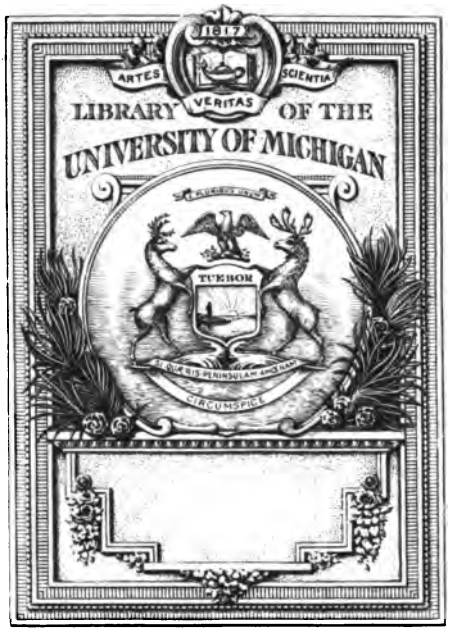
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THE CHRONICLES OF BARSETSHIRE

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

VOL. VII.

THE CHRONICLES
OF
BARSETSHIRE

BY
ANTHONY TROLLOPE

IN EIGHT VOLUMES
VOL. VII.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, LD.
1893

GRACE CRAWLEY AND LILY DALE IN THE CHURCH.—p. 142.

THE

LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

ANTHONY

IN TWO

VOL. I

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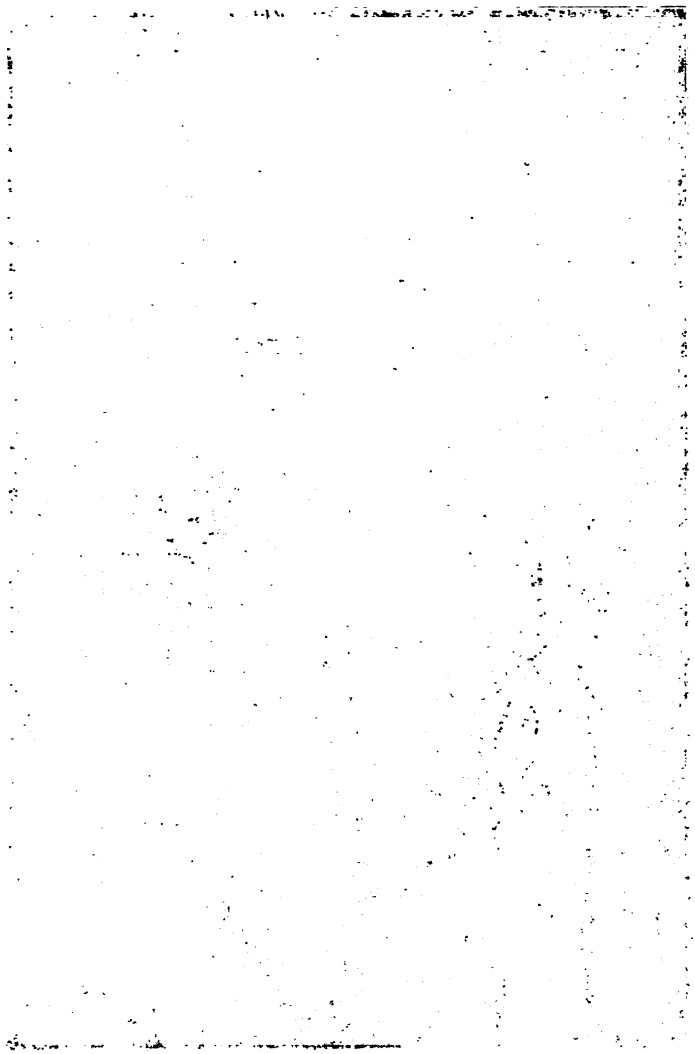

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THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET.

THE

LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET.

CHAPTER I.

HOW DID HE GET IT?

"I CAN never bring myself to believe it, John," said Mary Walker, the pretty daughter of Mr. George Walker, attorney of Silverbridge. Walker and Winthrop was the name of the firm, and they were respectable people, who did all the solicitors' business that had to be done in that part of Barsetshire on behalf of the Crown, were employed on the local business of the Duke of Omnium, who is great in those parts, and altogether held their heads up high, as provincial lawyers often do. They,—the Walkers,—lived in a great brick house in the middle of the town, gave dinners, to which the county gentlemen not unfrequently condescended to come, and in a mild way led the fashion in Silverbridge. "I can never bring myself to believe it, John," said Miss Walker.

"You'll have to bring yourself to believe it," said John, without taking his eyes from his book.

"A clergyman,—and such a clergyman too!"

"I don't see that that has anything to do with it." And as he now spoke John did take his eyes off his book. "Why should not a clergyman turn thief as well as anybody else? You girls always seem to forget that clergymen are only men after all."

"Their conduct is likely to be better than that of other men, I think."

"I deny it utterly," said John Walker. "I'll undertake to say that at this moment there are more clergymen in debt in Barsetshire than there are either lawyers or doctors. This man has always been in debt. Since he has been in the county I don't think he has ever been able to show his face in the High Street of Silverbridge."

"John, that is saying more than you have a right to say," said Mrs. Walker.

"Why, mother, this very cheque was given to a butcher who had threatened a few days before to post bills all about the county, giving an account of the debt that was due to him, if the money was not paid at once."

"More shame for Mr. Fletcher," said Mary. "He has made a fortune as butcher in Silverbridge."

"What has that to do with it? Of course a man likes to have his money. He had written three times to the bishop, and he had sent a man over to Hogglestock to get his little bill settled six days running. You see he got it at last. Of course a tradesman must look for his money."

"Mamma, do you think that Mr. Crawley stole the cheque?" Mary, as she asked the question, came and stood over her mother, looking at her with anxious eyes.

"I would rather give no opinion, my dear."

"But you must think something when everybody is talking about it, mamma."

"Of course my mother thinks he did," said John, going back to his book. "It is impossible that she should think otherwise."

"That is not fair, John," said Mrs. Walker; "and I won't have you fabricate thoughts for me, or put the expression of them into my mouth. The whole affair is very painful, and as your father is engaged in the inquiry I think that the less said about the matter in this house the better. I am sure that that would be your father's feeling."

"Of course I should say nothing about it before him," said Mary. "I know that papa does not wish to have it talked about. But how is one to help thinking about such a thing? It would be so terrible for all of us who belong to the Church."

"I do not see that at all," said John. "Mr. Crawley is not more than any other man just because he's a clergyman. I hate all that kind of clap-trap. There are a lot of people here in Silverbridge who think the matter shouldn't be followed up because the man is in a position which makes the crime more criminal in him than it would be in another."

"But I feel sure that Mr. Crawley has committed no crime at all," said Mary.

"My dear," said Mrs. Walker, "I have just said that I would rather you would not talk about it. Papa will be in directly."

"I won't, mamma;—only——"

"Only! yes; just only!" said John. "She'd go on till dinner if any one would stay to hear her."

"You've said twice as much as I have, John." But John had left the room before his sister's last words could reach him.

"You know, mamma, it is quite impossible not to help thinking of it," said Mary.

"I daré say it is, my dear."

"And when one knows the people it does make it so dreadful."

"But do you know them? I never spoke to Mr. Crawley in my life, and I do not think I ever saw her."

"I knew Grace very well;—when she used to come first to Miss Prettyman's school."

"Poor girl. I pity her."

"Pity her! Pity is no word for it, mamma. My heart bleeds for them. And yet I do not believe for a moment that he stole the cheque. How can it be possible? For though he may have been in debt because they have been so very, very poor; yet we all know that he has been an excellent clergyman. When the Robartses were dining here last I heard Mrs. Robarts say that for piety and devotion to his duties she had hardly ever seen any one equal to him. And the Robartses know more of them than anybody."

"They say that the dean is his great friend."

"What a pity it is that the Arabins should be away just now when he is in such trouble." And in this way the mother and daughter went on discussing the question of the clergyman's guilt in spite of Mrs. Walker's previously expressed desire that nothing more might be

said about it. But Mrs. Walker, like many other mothers, was apt to be more free in converse with her daughter than she was with her son. While they were thus talking the father came in from his office, and then the subject was dropped. He was a man between fifty and sixty years of age, with grey hair, rather short, and somewhat corpulent, but still gifted with that amount of personal comeliness which comfortable position and the respect of others will generally seem to give. A man rarely carries himself meanly whom the world holds high in esteem.

"I am very tired, my dear," said Mr. Walker.

"You look tired. Come and sit down for a few minutes before you dress. Mary, get your father's slippers." Mary instantly ran to the door.

"Thanks, my darling," said the father. And then he whispered to his wife, as soon as Mary was out of hearing, "I fear that unfortunate man is guilty. I fear he is! I fear he is!"

"Oh, heavens! what will become of them?"

"What indeed? She has been with me to-day."

"Has she? And what could you say to her?"

"I told her at first that I could not see her, and begged her not to speak to me about it. I tried to make her understand that she should go to some one else. But it was of no use."

"And how did it end?"

"I asked her to go in to you, but she declined. She said you could do nothing for her."

"And does she think her husband guilty?"

"No, indeed. She think him guilty! Nothing on earth,—or from heaven either, as I take it, would make her suppose it to be possible. She came to me simply to tell me how good he was."

"I love her for that," said Mrs. Walker.

"So did I. But what is the good of loving her? Thank you, dearest. I'll get your slippers for you some day, perhaps."

The whole county was astir in this matter of the alleged guilt of the Reverend Josiah Crawley,—the whole county, almost as keenly as the family of Mr. Walker, of Silverbridge. The crime laid to his charge was the theft of a cheque for twenty pounds, which he was said to have stolen out of a pocket-book left or dropped in his house, and to have passed as money into the hands of one Fletcher, a butcher of

Silverbridge, to whom he was indebted. Mr. Crawley was in those days the perpetual curate of Hogglestock, a parish in the northern extremity of East Barsetshire; a man known by all who knew anything of him to be very poor,—an unhappy, moody, disappointed man, upon whom the troubles of the world always seemed to come with a double weight. But he had ever been respected as a clergyman, since his old friend Mr. Arabin, the dean of Barchester, had given him the small incumbency which he now held. Though moody, unhappy, and disappointed, he was a hard-working, conscientious pastor among the poor people with whom his lot was cast; for in the parish of Hogglestock there resided only a few farmers higher in degree than field labourers, brickmakers, and such-like. Mr. Crawley had now passed some ten years of his life at Hogglestock; and during those years he had worked very hard to do his duty, struggling to teach the people around him perhaps too much of the mystery, but something also of the comfort, of religion. That he had become popular in his parish cannot be said of him. He was not a man to make himself popular in any position. I have said that he was moody and disappointed. He was even worse than this; he was morose, sometimes almost to insanity. There had been days in which even his wife had found it impossible to deal with him otherwise than as with an acknowledged lunatic. And this was known among the farmers, who talked about their clergyman among themselves as though he were a madman. But among the very poor, among the brickmakers of Hoggle End,—a lawless, drunken, terribly rough lot of humanity,—he was held in high respect; for they knew that he lived hardly, as they lived; that he worked hard, as they worked; and that the outside world was hard to him, as it was to them; and there had been an apparent sincerity of godliness about the man, and a manifest struggle to do his duty in spite of the world's ill-usage, which had won its way even with the rough; so that Mr. Crawley's name had stood high with many in his parish, in spite of the unfortunate peculiarity of his disposition. This was the man who was now accused of stealing a cheque for twenty pounds.

But before the circumstances of the alleged theft are stated a word or two must be said as to Mr. Crawley's family. It is declared that a good wife is a crown to her husband, but Mrs. Crawley had been much more than a crown to him. As had regarded all the inner life of the man,—all that portion of his life which had not been passed in the

pulpit or in pastoral teaching,—she had been crown, throne, and sceptre all in one. That she had endured with him and on his behalf the miseries of poverty, and the troubles of a life which had known no smiles, is perhaps not to be alleged as much to her honour. She had joined herself to him for better or worse, and it was her manifest duty to bear such things. Wives always have to bear them, knowing when they marry that they must take their chance. Mr. Crawley might have been a bishop, and Mrs. Crawley, when she married him, perhaps thought it probable that such would be his fortune. Instead of that he was now, just as he was approaching his fiftieth year, a perpetual curate, with an income of one hundred and thirty pounds per annum,—and a family. That had been Mrs. Crawley's luck in life, and of course she bore it. But she had also done much more than this. She had striven hard to be contented, or, rather, to appear to be contented, when he had been most wretched and most moody. She had struggled to conceal from him her own conviction as to his half-insanity, treating him at the same time with the respect due to an honoured father of a family, and with the careful measured indulgence fit for a sick and wayward child. In all the terrible troubles of their life her courage had been higher than his. The metal of which she was made had been tempered to a steel which was very rare and fine, but the rareness and fineness of which he had failed, if to appreciate, at any rate to imitate. He had often told her that she was without pride, because she had stooped to receive from others, on his behalf and on behalf of her children, things which were very needful, but which she could not buy. He had told her that she was a beggar, and that it was better to starve than to beg. She had borne the rebuke without a word in reply, and had then begged again for him and had endured the starvation herself. Nothing in their poverty had, for years past, been a shame to her; but every accident of their poverty was still, and ever had been, a living disgrace to him.

They had had many children, and three were still alive. Of the eldest, Grace Crawley, we shall hear much in the coming story. She was at this time nineteen years old, and there were those who said that, in spite of her poverty, her shabby outward apparel, and a certain thin, unfledged, unrounded form of person, a want of fulness in the lines of her figure, she was the prettiest girl in that part of the world. She was living now at a school in Silverbridge, where for the last year

she had been a teacher; and there were many in Silverbridge who declared that very bright prospects were opening to her,—that young Major Grantly of Cosby Lodge, who, though a widower with a young child, was the cynosure of all female eyes in and round Silverbridge, had found beauty in her thin face, and that Grace Crawley's fortune was made in the teeth, as it were, of the prevailing ill-fortune of her family. Bob Crawley, who was two years younger, was now at Marlbro' School, from whence it was intended that he should proceed to Cambridge and be educated there at the expense of his godfather, Dean Arabin. In this also the world saw a stroke of good luck. But then nothing was lucky to Mr. Crawley. Bob, indeed, who had done very well at school, might do well at Cambridge,—might do great things there. But Mr. Crawley would almost have preferred that the boy should work in the fields, than that he should be educated in a manner so manifestly eleemosynary. And then his clothes! How was he to be provided with clothes fit either for school or for college? But the dean and Mrs. Crawley between them managed this, leaving Mr. Crawley very much in the dark, as Mrs. Crawley was in the habit of leaving him. Then there was a younger daughter, Jane, still at home, who passed her life between her mother's work-table and her father's Greek, mending linen and learning to scan iambics,—for Mr. Crawley in his early days had been a ripe scholar.

And now there had come upon them all this terribly-crushing disaster. That poor Mr. Crawley had gradually got himself into a mess of debt at Silverbridge, from which he was quite unable to extricate himself, was generally known by all the world both of Silverbridge and Hogglestock. To a great many it was known that Dean Arabin had paid money for him, very much contrary to his own consent, and that he had quarrelled, or attempted to quarrel, with the dean in consequence,—had so attempted, although the money had in part passed through his own hands. There had been one creditor, Fletcher, the butcher of Silverbridge, who had of late been specially hard upon poor Crawley. This man, who had not been without good nature in his dealings, had heard stories of the dean's good-will and such-like, and had loudly expressed his opinion that the perpetual curate of Hogglestock would show a higher pride in allowing himself to be indebted to a rich brother clergyman, than in remaining under thrall to a butcher. And thus a rumour had grown up. And then the

butcher had written repeated letters to the bishop,—to Bishop Proudie of Barchester,—who had at first caused his chaplain to answer them, and had told Mr. Crawley somewhat roundly what was his opinion of a clergyman who eat meat and did not pay for it. But nothing that the bishop could say or do enabled Mr. Crawley to pay the butcher. It was very grievous to such a man as Mr. Crawley to receive these letters from such a man as Bishop Proudie. The letters came, and made festering wounds, but then there was an end of them. And at last there had come forth from the butcher's shop a threat that if the money were not paid by a certain date, printed bills should be posted about the county. All who heard of this in Silverbridge were very angry with Mr. Fletcher, for no one there had ever known a tradesman to take such a step before; but Fletcher swore that he would persevere, and defended himself by showing that six or seven months since, in the spring of the year, Mr. Crawley had been paying money in Silverbridge, but had paid none to him,—to him who had been not only his earliest but his most enduring creditor. "He got money from the dean in March," said Mr. Fletcher to Mr. Walker, "and he paid twelve pounds ten to Green, and seventeen pounds to Grobury, the baker." It was that seventeen pounds to Grobury, the baker, for flour, which made the butcher so fixedly determined to smite the poor clergyman hip and thigh. "And he paid money to Hall, and to Mrs. Holt, and to a deal more; but he never came near my shop. If he had even shown himself I would not have said so much about it." And then a day before the date named, Mrs. Crawley had come to Silverbridge, and had paid the butcher twenty pounds in four five-pound notes. So far Fletcher the butcher had been successful.

Some six weeks after this, inquiry began to be made as to a certain cheque for twenty pounds drawn by Lord Lufton on his bankers in London, which cheque had been lost early in the spring by Mr. Soames, Lord Lufton's man of business in Barsetshire, together with a pocket-book in which it had been folded. This pocket-book Soames had believed himself to have left at Mr. Crawley's house, and had gone so far, even at the time of the loss, as to express his absolute conviction that he had so left it. He was in the habit of paying a rentcharge to Mr. Crawley on behalf of Lord Lufton, amounting to twenty pounds four shillings, every half-year. Lord Lufton held the large tithes of Hogglestock, and paid annually a sum of forty pounds eight shillings

to the incumbent. This amount was, as a rule, remitted punctually by Mr. Soames through the post. On the occasion now spoken of he had had some reason for visiting Hogglestock and had paid the money personally to Mr. Crawley. Of so much there was no doubt. But he had paid it by a cheque drawn by himself on his own bankers at Barchester, and that cheque had been cashed in the ordinary way on the next morning. On returning to his own house in Barchester he had missed his pocket-book, and had written to Mr. Crawley to make inquiry. There had been no money in it, beyond the cheque drawn by Lord Lufton for twenty pounds. Mr. Crawley had answered this letter by another, saying that no pocket-book had been found in his house. All this had happened in March.

In October, Mrs. Crawley paid the twenty pounds to Fletcher, the butcher, and in November Lord Lufton's cheque was traced back through the Barchester bank to Mr. Crawley's hands. A brickmaker of Hoggle End, much favoured by Mr. Crawley, had asked for change over the counter of this Barchester bank,—not, as will be understood, the bank on which the cheque was drawn,—and had received it. The accommodation had been refused to the man at first, but when he presented the cheque the second day, bearing Mr. Crawley's name on the back of it, together with a note from Mr. Crawley himself, the money had been given for it; and the identical notes so paid had been given to Fletcher, the butcher, on the next day by Mrs. Crawley. When inquiry was made, Mr. Crawley stated that the cheque had been paid to him by Mr. Soames, on behalf of the rentcharge due to him by Lord Lufton. But the error of this statement was at once made manifest. There was the cheque, signed by Mr. Soames himself, for the exact amount,—twenty pounds four shillings. As he himself declared, he had never in his life paid money on behalf of Lord Lufton by a cheque drawn by his lordship. The cheque given by Lord Lufton, and which had been lost, had been a private matter between them. His lordship had simply wanted change in his pocket, and his agent had given it to him. Mr. Crawley was speedily shown to be altogether wrong in the statement made to account for possession of the cheque.

Then he became very moody and would say nothing further. But his wife, who had known nothing of his first statement when made, came forward and declared that she believed the cheque for twenty pounds to be a part of a present given by Dean Arabin to her husband

in April last. There had been, she said, great heartburnings about this gift, and she had hardly dared to speak to her husband on the subject. An execution had been threatened in the house by Grobury, the baker, of which the dean had heard. Then there had been some scenes at the deanery between her husband and the dean and Mrs. Arabin, as to which she had subsequently heard much from Mrs. Arabin. Mrs. Arabin had told her that money had been given,—and at last taken. Indeed, so much had been very apparent, as bills had been paid to the amount of at least fifty pounds. When the threat made by the butcher had reached her husband's ears, the effect upon him had been very grievous. All this was the story told by Mrs. Crawley to Mr. Walker, the lawyer, when he was pushing his inquiries. She, poor woman, at any rate told all that she knew. Her husband had told her one morning, when the butcher's threat was weighing heavily on his mind, speaking to her in such a humour that she found it impossible to cross-question him, that he had still money left, though it was money which he had hoped that he would not be driven to use; and he had given her the four five-pound notes, and had told her to go to Silverbridge and satisfy the man who was so eager for his money. She had done so, and had felt no doubt that the money so forthcoming had been given by the dean. That was the story as told by Mrs. Crawley.

But how could she explain her husband's statement as to the cheque, which had been shown to be altogether false? All this passed between Mr. Walker and Mrs. Crawley, and the lawyer was very gentle with her. In the first stages of the inquiry he had simply desired to learn the truth, and place the clergyman above suspicion. Latterly, being bound as he was to follow the matter up officially, he would not have seen Mrs. Crawley, had he been able to escape that lady's importunity. "Mr. Walker," she had said, at last, "you do not know my husband. No one knows him but I. It is hard to have to tell you of all our troubles." "If I can lessen them, trust me that I will do so," said the lawyer. "No one, I think, can lessen them in this world," said the lady. "The truth is, sir, that my husband often knows not what he says. When he declared that the money had been paid to him by Mr. Soames, most certainly he thought so. There are times when in his misery he knows not what he says,—when he forgets everything."

Up to this period Mr. Walker had not suspected Mr. Crawley of

anything dishonest, nor did he suspect him as yet. The poor man had probably received the money from the dean, and had told the lie about it, not choosing to own that he had taken money from his rich friend, and thinking that there would be no further inquiry. He had been very foolish, and that would be the end of it. Mr. Soames was by no means so good-natured in his belief. "How should my pocket-book have got into Dean Arabin's hands?" said Mr. Soames, almost triumphantly. "And then I felt sure at the time that I had left it at Crawley's house!"

Mr. Walker wrote a letter to the dean, who at that moment was in Florence, on his way to Rome, from whence he was going on to the Holy Land. There came back a letter from Dr. Arabin, saying that on the 17th of March he had given to Mr. Crawley a sum of fifty pounds, and that the payment had been made with five Bank of England notes of ten pounds each, which had been handed by him to his friend in the library at the deanery. The letter was very short, and may, perhaps, be described as having been almost curt. Mr. Walker, in his anxiety to do the best he could for Mr. Crawley, had simply asked a question as to the nature of the transaction between the two gentlemen, saying that no doubt the dean's answer would clear up a little mystery which existed at present respecting a cheque for twenty pounds. The dean in answer simply stated the fact as it has been given above; but he wrote to Mr. Crawley begging to know what was in truth this new difficulty, and offering any assistance in his power. He explained all the circumstances of the money, as he remembered them. The sum advanced had certainly consisted of fifty pounds, and there had certainly been five Bank of England notes. He had put the notes into an envelope, which he had not closed, but had addressed to Mr. Crawley, and had placed this envelope in his friend's hands. He went on to say that Mrs. Arabin would have written, but that she was in Paris with her son. Mrs. Arabin was to remain in Paris during his absence in the Holy Land, and meet him in Italy on his return. As she was so much nearer at hand, the dean expressed a hope that Mrs. Crawley would apply to her if there was any trouble.

The letter to Mr. Walker was conclusive as to the dean's money. Mr. Crawley had not received Lord Lufton's cheque from the dean. Then whence had he received it? The poor wife was left by the lawyer to obtain further information from her husband. Ah, who can

tell how terrible were the scenes between that poor pair of wretches, as the wife endeavoured to learn the truth from her miserable, half-maddened husband! That her husband had been honest throughout, she had not any shadow of doubt. She did not doubt that to her at least he endeavoured to tell the truth, as far as his poor racked imperfect memory would allow him to remember what was true and what was not true. The upshot of it all was that the husband declared that he still believed that the money had come to him from the dean. He had kept it by him, not wishing to use it if he could help it. He had forgotten it,—so he said at times,—having understood from Arabin that he was to have fifty pounds, and having received more. If it had not come to him from the dean, then it had been sent to him by the Prince of Evil for his utter undoing; and there were times in which he seemed to think that such had been the manner in which the fatal cheque had reached him. In all that he said he was terribly confused, contradictory, unintelligible,—speaking almost as a madman might speak,—ending always by declaring that the cruelty of the world had been too much for him, that the waters were meeting over his head, and praying for God's mercy to remove him from the world. It need hardly be said that his poor wife in these days had a burden on her shoulders that was more than enough to crush any woman.

She at last acknowledged to Mr. Walker that she could not account for the twenty pounds. She herself would write again to the dean about it, but she hardly hoped for any further assistance there. "The dean's answer is very plain," said Mr. Walker. "He says that he gave Mr. Crawley five ten-pound notes, and those five notes we have traced to Mr. Crawley's hands." Then Mrs. Crawley could say nothing further beyond making protestations of her husband's innocence.

CHAPTER II.

BY HEAVENS HE HAD BETTER NOT!

I MUST ask the reader to make the acquaintance of Major Grantly of Cosby Lodge, before he is introduced to the family of Mr. Crawley, at their parsonage in Hogglestock. It has been said that Major Grantly had thrown a favourable eye on Grace Crawley,—by which report occasion was given to all men and women in those parts to hint that the Crawleys, with all their piety and humility, were very cunning, and that one of the Grantlys was,—to say the least of it,—very soft, admitted as it was throughout the county of Barsetshire, that there was no family therein more widely awake to the affairs generally of this world and the next combined, than the family of which Archdeacon Grantly was the respected head and patriarch. Mrs. Walker, the most good-natured woman in Silverbridge, had acknowledged to her daughter that she could not understand it,—that she could not see anything at all in Grace Crawley. Mr. Walker had shrugged his shoulders and expressed a confident belief that Major Grantly had not a shilling of his own beyond his half-pay and his late wife's fortune, which was only six thousand pounds. Others, who were ill-natured, had declared that Grace Crawley was little better than a beggar, and that she could not possibly have acquired the manners of a gentlewoman. Fletcher the butcher had wondered whether the major would pay his future father-in-law's debts; and Dr. Tempest, the old rector of Silverbridge, whose four daughters were all as yet unmarried, had turned up his old nose, and had hinted that half-pay majors did not get caught in marriage so easily as that.

Such and such like had been the expressions of the opinion of men and women in Silverbridge. But the matter had been discussed further afield than at Silverbridge, and had been allowed to intrude itself as a most unwelcome subject into the family conclave of the archdeacon's

rectory. To those who have not as yet learned the fact from the public character and well-appreciated reputation of the man, let it be known that Archdeacon Grantly was at this time, as he had been for many years previously, Archdeacon of Barchester and Rector of Plumstead Episcopi. A rich and prosperous man he had ever been,—though he also had had his sore troubles, as we all have,—his having arisen chiefly from want of that higher ecclesiastical promotion which his soul had coveted, and for which the whole tenour of his life had especially fitted him. Now, in his green old age, he had ceased to covet, but had not ceased to repine. He had ceased to covet aught for himself, but still coveted much for his children; and for him such a marriage as this which was now suggested for his son was encompassed almost with the bitterness of death. "I think it would kill me," he had said to his wife; "by heavens, I think it would be my death!"

A daughter of the archdeacon had made a splendid matrimonial alliance,—so splendid that its history was at the time known to all the aristocracy of the county, and had not been altogether forgotten by any of those who keep themselves well instructed in the details of the peerage. Griselda Grantly had married Lord Dumbello, the eldest son of the Marquis of Hartletop,—than whom no English nobleman was more puissant, if broad acres, many castles, high title, and stars and ribbons are any signs of puissance,—and she was now, herself, Marchioness of Hartletop, with a little Lord Dumbello of her own. The daughter's visits to the parsonage of her father were of necessity rare, such necessity having come from her own altered sphere of life. A Marchioness of Hartletop has special duties which will hardly permit her to devote herself frequently to the humdrum society of a clerical father and mother. That it would be so, father and mother had understood when they sent the fortunate girl forth to a higher world. But, now and again, since her august marriage, she had laid her coroneted head upon one of the old rectory pillows for a night or so, and on such occasions all the Plumsteadians had been loud in praise of her condescension. Now it happened that when this second and more aggravated blast of the evil wind reached the rectory,—the renewed waft of the tidings as to Major Grantly's infatuation regarding Miss Grace Crawley, which, on its renewal, seemed to bring with it something of confirmation,—it chanced, I say, that at that moment Griselda, Marchioness of Hartletop, was gracing the paternal mansion. It need

hardly be said that the father was not slow to invoke such a daughter's counsel, and such a sister's aid.

I am not quite sure that the mother would have been equally quick to ask her daughter's advice had she been left in the matter entirely to her own propensities. Mrs. Grantly had ever loved her daughter dearly, and had been very proud of that great success in life which Griselda had achieved; but in late years, the child had become, as a woman, separate from the mother, and there had arisen, not unnaturally, a break of that close confidence which in early years had existed between them. Griselda, Marchioness of Hartletop, was more than ever a daughter to the archdeacon, even though he might never see her. Nothing could rob him of the honour of such a progeny,—nothing, even though there had been actual estrangement between them. But it was not so with Mrs. Grantly. Griselda had done very well, and Mrs. Grantly had rejoiced; but she had lost her child. Now the major, who had done well also, though in a much lesser degree, was still her child, moving in the same sphere of life with her, still dependent in a great degree upon his father's bounty, a neighbour in the county, a frequent visitor at the parsonage, and a visitor who could be received without any of that trouble which attended the unfrequent comings of Griselda, the marchioness, to the home of her youth. And for this reason Mrs. Grantly, terribly put out as she was at the idea of a marriage between her son and one standing so poorly in the world's esteem as Grace Crawley, would not have brought forward the matter before her daughter, had she been left to her own desires. A marchioness in one's family is a tower of strength, no doubt; but there are counsellors so strong that we do not wish to trust them, lest in the trusting we ourselves be overwhelmed by their strength. Now Mrs. Grantly was by no means willing to throw her influence into the hands of her titled daughter.

But the titled daughter was consulted and gave her advice. On the occasion of the present visit to Plumstead she had consented to lay her head for two nights on the parsonage pillows, and on the second evening her brother the major was to come over from Cosby Lodge to meet her. Before his coming the affair of Grace Crawley was discussed.

"It would break my heart, Griselda" said the archdeacon, piteously, —"and your mother's."

"There is nothing against the girl's character," said Mrs. Grantly, "and the father and mother are gentlefolks by birth; but such a marriage for Henry would be very unseemly."

"To make it worse, there is this terrible story about him," said the archdeacon.

"I don't suppose there is much in that," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I can't say. There is no knowing. They told me to-day in Barchester that Soames is pressing the case against him."

"Who is Soames, papa?" asked the marchioness.

"He is Lord Lufton's man of business, my dear."

"Oh, Lord Lufton's man of business!" There was something of a sneer in the tone of the lady's voice as she mentioned Lord Lufton's name.

"I am told," continued the archdeacon, "that Soames declares the cheque was taken from a pocket-book which he left by accident in Crawley's house."

"You don't mean to say, archdeacon, that you think that Mr. Crawley,—a clergyman,—stole it!" said Mrs. Grantly.

"I don't say anything of the kind, my dear. But supposing Mr. Crawley to be as honest as the sun, you wouldn't wish Henry to marry his daughter."

"Certainly not," said the mother. "It would be an unfitting marriage. The poor girl has had no advantages."

"He is not able even to pay his baker's bill. I always thought Arabin was very wrong to place such a man in such a parish as Hogglestock. Of course the family could not live there." The Arabin here spoken of was Dr. Arabin, dean of Barchester. The dean and the archdeacon had married sisters, and there was much intimacy between the families.

"After all it is only a rumour as yet," said Mrs. Grantly.

"Fothergill told me only yesterday, that he sees her almost every day," said the father. "What are we to do, Griselda? You know how headstrong Henry is." The marchioness sat quite still; looking at the fire, and made no immediate answer to this address.

"There is nothing for it, but that you should tell him what you think," said the mother.

"If his sister were to speak to him, it might do much," said the archdeacon. To this Mrs. Grantly said nothing; but Mrs. Grantly's

daughter understood very well that her mother's confidence in her was not equal to her father's. Lady Hartletop said nothing, but still sat, with impassive face, and eyes fixed upon the fire. "I think that if you were to speak to him, Griselda, and tell him that he would disgrace his family, he would be ashamed to go on with such a marriage," said the father. "He would feel, connected as he is with Lord Hartletop——"

"I don't think he would feel anything about that," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I dare say not," said Lady Hartletop.

"I am sure he ought to feel it," said the father. They were all silent, and sat looking at the fire.

"I suppose, papa, you allow Henry an income," said Lady Hartletop, after a while.

"Indeed I do,—eight hundred a year."

"Then I think I should tell him that that must depend upon his conduct. Mamma, if you won't mind ringing the bell, I will send for Cecile, and go upstairs and dress." Then the marchioness went upstairs to dress, and in about an hour the major arrived in his dog-cart. He also was allowed to go upstairs to dress before anything was said to him about his great offence.

"Griselda is right," said the archdeacon, speaking to his wife out of his dressing-room. "She always was right. I never knew a young woman with more sense than Griselda."

"But you do not mean to say that in any event you would stop Henry's income?" Mrs. Grantly also was dressing, and made reply out of her bed-room.

"Upon my word, I don't know. As a father I would do anything to prevent such a marriage as that."

"But if he did marry her in spite of the threat? And he would if he had once said so."

"Is a father's word, then, to go for nothing; and a father who allows his son eight hundred a year? If he told the girl that he would be ruined she couldn't hold him to it."

"My dear, they'd know as well as I do, that you would give way after three months."

"But why should I give way? Good heavens!"

"Of course you'd give way, and of course we should have the young woman here, and of course we should make the best of it."

The idea of having Grace Crawley as a daughter at the Plumstead Rectory was too much for the archdeacon, and he resented it by additional vehemence in the tone of his voice, and a nearer personal approach to the wife of his bosom. All unaccoutred as he was, he stood in the doorway between the two rooms, and thence fulminated at his wife his assurances that he would never allow himself to be immersed in such a depth of humility as that she had suggested. "I can tell you this, then, that if ever she comes here, I shall take care to be away. I will never receive her here. You can do as you please."

"That is just what I cannot do. If I could do as I pleased, I would put a stop to it at once."

"It seems to me that you want to encourage him. A child about sixteen years of age!"

"I am told she is nineteen."

"What does it matter if she was fifty-nine? Think of what her bringing up has been. Think what it would be to have all the Crawleys in our house for ever, and all their debts, and all their disgrace!"

"I do not know that they have ever been disgraced."

"You'll see. The whole county has heard of the affair of this twenty pounds. Look at that dear girl upstairs, who has been such a comfort to us. Do you think it would be fit that she and her husband should meet such a one as Grace Crawley at our table?"

"I don't think it would do them a bit of harm," said Mrs. Grantly. "But there would be no chance of that, seeing that Griselda's husband never comes to us."

"He was here the year before last."

"And I never was so tired of a man in all my life."

"Then you prefer the Crawleys, I suppose. This is what you get from Eleanor's teaching." Eleanor was the dean's wife, and Mrs. Grantly's younger sister. "It has always been a sorrow to me that I ever brought Arabin into the diocese."

"I never asked you to bring him, archdeacon. But nobody was so glad as you when he proposed to Eleanor."

"Well, the long and the short of it is this, I shall tell Henry to-night that if he makes a fool of himself with this girl, he must not look

to me any longer for an income. He has about six hundred a year of his own, and if he chooses to throw himself away, he had better go and live in the south of France, or in Canada, or where he pleases. He shan't come here."

"I hope he won't marry the girl, with all my heart," said Mrs. Grantly.

"He had better not. By heavens, he had better not!"

"But if he does you'll be the first to forgive him."

On hearing this the archdeacon slammed the door, and retired to his washing apparatus. At the present moment he was very angry with his wife, but then she was so accustomed to such anger, and was so well aware that it in truth meant nothing, that it did not make her unhappy. The archdeacon and Mrs. Grantly had now been man and wife for more than a quarter of a century, and had never in truth quarrelled. He had the most profound respect for her judgment, and the most implicit reliance on her conduct. She had never yet offended him, or caused him to repent the hour in which he had made her Mrs. Grantly. But she had come to understand that she might use a woman's privilege with her tongue; and she used it,—not altogether to his comfort. On the present occasion he was the more annoyed because he felt that she might be right. "It would be a positive disgrace, and I never would see him again," he said to himself. And yet, as he said it, he knew that he would not have the strength of character to carry him through a prolonged quarrel with his son. "I never would see her,—never, never!" he said to himself. "And then such an opening as he might have at his sister's house!"

Major Grantly had been a successful man in life,—with the one exception of having lost the mother of his child within a twelvemonth of his marriage and within a few hours of that child's birth. He had served in India as a very young man, and had been decorated with the Victoria Cross. Then he had married a lady with some money, and had left the active service of the army with the concurring advice of his own family and that of his wife. He had taken a small place in his father's county, but the wife for whose comfort he had taken it had died before she was permitted to see it. Nevertheless he had gone to reside there, hunting a good deal and farming a little, making himself popular in the district, and keeping up the good name of Grantly in a successful way, till—alas,—it had seemed good to him to throw those

favouring eyes on poor Grace Crawley. His wife had now been dead just two years, and as he was still under thirty, no one could deny it would be right that he should marry again. No one did deny it. His father had hinted that he ought to do so, and had generously whispered that if some little increase to the major's present income were needed, he might possibly be able to do something. "What is the good of keeping it?" the archdeacon had said in liberal after-dinner warmth. "I only want it for your brother and yourself." The brother was a clergyman.

And the major's mother had strongly advised him to marry again without loss of time. "My dear Henry," she had said, "you'll never be younger, and youth does go for something. As for dear little Edith, being a girl, she is almost no impediment. Do you know those two girls at Chaldicotes?"

"What, Mrs. Thorne's nieces?"

"No; they are not her nieces but her cousins. Emily Dunstable is very handsome;—and as for money——!"

"But what about birth, mother?"

"One can't have everything, my dear."

"As far as I am concerned, I should like to have everything or nothing," the major had said laughing. Now for him to think of Grace Crawley after that,—of Grace Crawley who had no money, and no particular birth, and not even beauty itself,—so at least Mrs. Grantly said,—who had not even enjoyed the ordinary education of a lady, was too bad. Nothing had been wanting to Emily Dunstable's education, and it was calculated that she would have at least twenty thousand pounds on the day of her marriage.

The disappointment to the mother would be the more sore because she had gone to work upon her little scheme with reference to Miss Emily Dunstable, and had at first, as she thought, seen her way to success,—to success in spite of the disparaging words which her son had spoken to her. Mrs. Thorne's house at Chaldicotes,—or Dr. Thorne's house as it should, perhaps, be more properly called, for Dr. Thorne was the husband of Mrs. Thorne,—was in these days the pleasantest house in Barsetshire. No one saw so much company as the Thornes, or spent so much money in so pleasant a way. The great county families, the Pallisers and the De Courcys, the Luftons and the Greshams, were no doubt grander, and some of them were perhaps

richer than the Chaldicote Thornes,—as they were called to distinguish them from the Thornes of Ullathorne; but none of these people were so pleasant in their ways, so free in their hospitality, or so easy in their modes of living, as the doctor and his wife. When first Chaldicotes, a very old country-seat, had by the chances of war fallen into their hands and been newly furnished, and newly decorated, and newly gardened, and newly greenhoused and hot-watered by them, many of the county people had turned up their noses at them. Dear old Lady Lufton had done so, and had been greatly grieved,—saying nothing, however, of her grief,—when her son and daughter-in-law had broken away from her, and submitted themselves to the blandishments of the doctor's wife. And the Grantlys had stood aloof, partly influenced, no doubt, by their dear and intimate old friend Miss Monica Thorne of Ullathorne, a lady of the very old school, who, though good as gold and kind as charity, could not endure that an interloping Mrs. Thorne, who never had a grandfather, should come to honour and glory in the county, simply because of her riches. Miss Monica Thorne stood out, but Mrs. Grantly gave way, and having once given way found that Dr. Thorne, and Mrs. Thorne, and Emily Dunstable, and Chaldicote House together, were very charming. And the major had been once there with her, and had made himself very pleasant, and there had certainly been some little passage of incipient love between him and Miss Emily Dunstable, as to which Mrs. Thorne, who managed everything, seemed to be well pleased. This had been after the first mention made by Mrs. Grantly to her son of Emily Dunstable's name, but before she had heard any faintest whispers of his fancy for Grace Crawley; and she had therefore been justified in hoping,—almost in expecting, that Emily Dunstable would be her daughter-in-law, and was therefore the more aggrieved when this terrible Crawley peril first opened itself before her eyes.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARCHDEACON'S THREAT

THE dinner-party at the rectory comprised none but the Grantly family. The marchioness had written to say that she preferred to have it so. The father had suggested that the Thornes of Ullathorne, very old friends, might be asked, and the Greshams from Boxall Hill, and had even promised to endeavour to get old Lady Lufton over to the rectory, Lady Lufton having in former years been Griselda's warm friend. But Lady Hartletop had preferred to see her dear father and mother in privacy. Her brother Henry she would be glad to meet, and hoped to make some arrangement with him for a short visit to Hartlebury, her husband's place in Shropshire,—as to which latter hint, it may, however, be at once said, that nothing further was spoken after the Crawley alliance had been suggested. And there had been a very sore point mooted by the daughter in a request made by her to her father that she might not be called upon to meet her grandfather, her mother's father, Mr. Harding, a clergyman of Barchester, who was now stricken in years.—"Papa would not have come," said Mrs. Grantly, "but I think,—I do think——" Then she stopped herself.

"Your father has odd ways sometimes, my dear. You know how fond I am of having him here myself."

"It does not signify," said Mrs. Grantly. "Do not let us say anything more about it. Of course we cannot have everything. I am told the child does her duty in her sphere of life, and I suppose we ought to be contented." Then Mrs. Grantly went up to her own room, and there she cried. Nothing was said to the major on the unpleasant subject of the Crawleys before dinner. He met his sister in the drawing-room, and was allowed to kiss her noble cheek. "I hope Edith is well, Henry," said the sister. "Quite well; and little Dumbello is the same, I hope?" "Thank you, yes; quite well." Then there seemed

to be nothing more to be said between the two. The major never made inquiries after the august family, or would allow it to appear that he was conscious of being shone upon by the wife of a marquis. Any adulation which Griselda received of that kind came from her father, and, therefore, unconsciously she had learned to think that her father was better bred than the other members of her family, and more fitted by nature to move in that sacred circle to which she herself had been exalted. We need not dwell upon the dinner, which was but a dull affair. Mrs. Grantly strove to carry on the family party exactly as it would have been carried on had her daughter married the son of some neighbouring squire; but she herself was conscious of the struggle, and the fact of there being a struggle produced failure. The rector's servants treated the daughter of the house with special awe, and the marchioness herself moved, and spoke, and ate, and drank with a cold magnificence, which I think had become a second nature with her, but which was not on that account the less oppressive. Even the archdeacon, who enjoyed something in that which was so disagreeable to his wife, felt a relief when he was left alone after dinner with his son. He felt relieved as his son got up to open the door for his mother and sister, but was aware at the same time that he had before him a most difficult and possibly a most disastrous task. His dear son Henry was not a man to be talked smoothly out of, or into, any propriety. He had a will of his own, and having hitherto been a successful man, who in youth had fallen into few youthful troubles,—who had never justified his father in using stern parental authority,—was not now inclined to bend his neck. "Henry," said the archdeacon, "what are you drinking? That's '34 port, but it's not just what it should be. Shall I send for another bottle?"

"It will do for me, sir. I shall only take a glass."

"I shall drink two or three glasses of claret. But you young fellows have become so desperately temperate."

"We take our wine at dinner, sir."

"By-the-by, how well Griselda is looking."

"Yes, she is. It's always easy for women to look well when they're rich." How would Grace Crawley look, then, who was poor as poverty itself, and who should remain poor, if his son was fool enough to marry her? That was the train of thought which ran through the archdeacon's mind. "I do not think much of riches," said he, "but it

is always well that a gentleman's wife or a gentleman's daughter should have a sufficiency to maintain her position in life."

"You may say the same, sir, of everybody's wife and everybody's daughter."

"You know what I mean, Henry."

"I am not quite sure that I do, sir."

"Perhaps I had better speak out at once. A rumour has reached your mother and me, which we don't believe for a moment, but which, nevertheless, makes us unhappy even as a report. They say that there is a young woman living in Silverbridge to whom you are becoming attached."

"Is there any reason why I should not become attached to a young woman in Silverbridge?—though I hope any young woman to whom I may become attached will be worthy at any rate of being called a young lady."

"I hope so, Henry; I hope so. I do hope so."

"So much I will promise, sir; but I will promise nothing more."

The archdeacon looked across into his son's face, and his heart sank within him. His son's voice and his son's eyes seemed to tell him two things. They seemed to tell him, firstly, that the rumour about Grace Crawley was true; and, secondly, that the major was resolved not to be talked out of his folly. "But you are not engaged to any one, are you?" said the archdeacon. The son did not at first make any answer, and then the father repeated the question. "Considering our mutual positions, Henry, I think you ought to tell me if you are engaged."

"I am not engaged. Had I become so, I should have taken the first opportunity of telling either you or my mother."

"Thank God. Now, my dear boy, I can speak out more plainly. The young woman whose name I have heard is daughter to that Mr. Crawley who is perpetual curate at Hogglestock. I knew that there could be nothing in it."

"But there is something in it, sir."

"What is there in it? Do not keep me in suspense, Henry. What is it you mean?"

"It is rather hard to be cross-questioned in this way on such a subject. When you express yourself as thankful that there is nothing in the rumour, I am forced to stop you, as otherwise it is possible that hereafter you may say that I have deceived you."

"But you don't mean to marry her?"

"I certainly do not mean to pledge myself not to do so."

"Do you mean to tell me, Henry, that you are in love with Miss Crawley?" Then there was another pause, during which the archdeacon sat looking for an answer; but the major said never a word. "Am I to suppose that you intend to lower yourself by marrying a young woman who cannot possibly have enjoyed any of the advantages of a lady's education? I say nothing of the imprudence of the thing; nothing of her own want of fortune; nothing of your having to maintain a whole family steeped in poverty; nothing of the debts and character of the father, upon whom, as I understand, at this moment there rests a very grave suspicion of—of—of—what I'm afraid I must call downright theft."

"Downright theft, certainly,—if he were guilty."

"I say nothing of all that; but looking at the young woman herself——"

"She is simply the best educated girl whom it has ever been my lot to meet."

"Henry, I have a right to expect that you will be honest with me."

"I am honest with you."

"Do you mean to ask this girl to marry you?"

"I do not think that you have any right to ask me that question, sir."

"I have a right at any rate to tell you this, that if you so far disgrace yourself and me, I shall consider myself bound to withdraw from you all the sanction which would be conveyed by my—my—my continued assistance."

"Do you intend me to understand that you will stop my income?"

"Certainly I should."

"Then, sir, I think you would behave to me most cruelly. You advised me to give up my profession."

"Not in order that you might marry Grace Crawley."

"I claim the privilege of a man of my age to do as I please in such a matter as marriage. Miss Crawley is a lady. Her father is a clergyman, as is mine. Her father's oldest friend is my uncle. There is nothing on earth against her except her poverty. I do not think I ever heard of such cruelty on a father's part."

"Very well, Henry."

"I have endeavoured to do my duty by you, sir, always; and by my mother. You can treat me in this way, if you please, but it will not have any effect on my conduct. You can stop my allowance to-morrow, if you like it. I had not as yet made up my mind to make an offer to Miss Crawley, but I shall now do so to-morrow morning."

This was very bad indeed, and the archdeacon was extremely unhappy. He was by no means at heart a cruel man. He loved his children dearly. If this disagreeable marriage were to take place, he would doubtless do exactly as his wife had predicted. He would not stop his son's income for a single quarter; and, though he went on telling himself that he would stop it, he knew in his own heart that any such severity was beyond his power. He was a generous man in money matters,—having a dislike for poverty which was not generous,—and for his own sake could not have endured to see a son of his in want. But he was terribly anxious to exercise the power which the use of the threat might give him. "Henry," he said, "you are treating me badly, very badly. My anxiety has always been for the welfare of my children. Do you think that Miss Crawley would be a fitting sister-in-law for that dear girl upstairs?"

"Certainly I do, or for any other dear girl in the world;—excepting that Griselda, who is not clever, would hardly be able to appreciate Miss Crawley, who is clever."

"Griselda not clever! Good heavens!" Then there was another pause, and as the major said nothing, the father continued his entreaties. "Pray, pray think of what my wishes are, and your mother's. You are not committed as yet. Pray think of us while there is time. I would rather double your income if I saw you marry any one that we could name here."

"I have enough as it is, if I may only be allowed to know that it will not be capriciously withdrawn." The archdeacon filled his glass unconsciously, and sipped his wine, while he thought what further he might say. Perhaps it might be better that he should say nothing further at the present moment. The major, however, was indiscreet, and pushed the question. "May I understand, sir, that your threat is withdrawn, and that my income is secure?"

"What, if you marry this girl?"

"Yes, sir; will my income be continued to me if I marry Miss Crawley?"

"No; it will not." Then the father got up hastily, pushed the decanter back angrily from his hand, and without saying another word walked away into the drawing-room. That evening at the rectory was very gloomy. The archdeacon now and again said a word or two to his daughter, and his daughter answered him in monosyllables. The major sat apart moodily, and spoke to no one. Mrs. Grantly, understanding well what had passed, knew that nothing could be done at the present moment to restore family comfort; so she sat by the fire and knitted. Exactly at ten they all went to bed.

"Dear Henry," said the mother to her son the next morning; "think much of yourself, and of your child, and of us, before you take any great step in life."

"I will, mother," said he. Then he went out and put on his wrapper, and got into his dog-cart, and drove himself off to Silverbridge. He had not spoken to his father since they were in the dining-room on the previous evening. When he started, the marchioness had not yet come downstairs; but at eleven she breakfasted, and at twelve she also was taken away. Poor Mrs. Grantly had not had much comfort from her children's visits.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLERGYMAN'S HOUSE AT HOGGLESTOCK.

MRS. CRAWLEY had walked from Hogglestock to Silverbridge on the occasion of her visit to Mr. Walker, the attorney, and had been kindly sent back by that gentleman in his wife's little open carriage. The tidings she brought home with her to her husband were very grievous. The magistrates would sit on the next Thursday,—it was then Friday,—and Mr. Crawley had better appear before them to answer the charge

made by Mr. Soames. He would be served with a summons, which he could obey of his own accord. There had been many points very closely discussed between Walker and Mrs. Crawley, as to which there had been great difficulty in the choice of words which should be tender enough in regard to the feelings of the poor lady, and yet strong enough to convey to her the very facts as they stood. Would Mr. Crawley come, or must a policeman be sent to fetch him? The magistrates had already issued a warrant for his apprehension. Such in truth was the fact, but they had agreed with Mr. Walker, that as there was no reasonable ground for anticipating any attempt at escape on the part of the reverend gentleman, the lawyer might use what gentle means he could for ensuring the clergyman's attendance. Could Mrs. Crawley undertake to say that he would appear? Mrs. Crawley did undertake either that her husband should appear on the Thursday, or else that she would send over in the early part of the week and declare her inability to ensure his appearance. In that case it was understood the policeman must come. Then Mr. Walker had suggested that Mr. Crawley had better employ a lawyer. Upon this Mrs. Crawley had looked beseechingly up into Mr. Walker's face, and had asked him to undertake the duty. He was of course obliged to explain that he was already employed on the other side. Mr. Soames had secured his services, and though he was willing to do all in his power to mitigate the sufferings of the family, he could not abandon the duty he had undertaken. He named another attorney, however, and then sent the poor woman home in his wife's carriage. "I fear that unfortunate man is guilty. I fear he is," Mr. Walker had said to his wife within ten minutes of the departure of the visitor.

Mrs. Crawley would not allow herself to be driven up to the garden gate before her own house, but had left the carriage some three hundred yards off, down the road, and from thence she walked home. It was now quite dark. It was nearly six in the evening on a wet December night, and although cloaks and shawls had been supplied to her, she was wet and cold when she reached her home. But at such a moment, anxious as she was to prevent the additional evil which would come to them all from illness to herself, she could not pass through to her room till she had spoken to her husband. He was sitting in the one sitting-room on the left side of the passage as the house was entered, and with him was their daughter Jane, a girl now

nearly sixteen years of age. There was no light in the room, and hardly more than a spark of fire showed itself in the grate. The father was sitting on one side of the hearth, in an old arm-chair, and there he had sat for the last hour without speaking. His daughter had been in and out of the room, and had endeavoured to gain his attention now and again by a word, but he had never answered her, and had not even noticed her presence. At the moment when Mrs. Crawley's step was heard upon the gravel which led to the door, Jane was kneeling before the fire with a hand upon her father's arm. She had tried to get her hand into his, but he had either been unaware of the attempt, or had rejected it.

"Here is mamma, at last," said Jane, rising to her feet as her mother entered the house.

"Are you all in the dark?" said Mrs. Crawley, striving to speak in a voice that should not be sorrowful.

"Yes, mamma; we are in the dark. Papa is here. Oh, mamma, how wet you are!"

"Yes, dear. It is raining. Get a light out of the kitchen, Jane, and I will go upstairs in two minutes." Then, when Jane was gone, the wife made her way in the dark over to her husband's side, and spoke a word to him. "Josiah," she said, "will you not speak to me?"

"What should I speak about? Where have you been?"

"I have been to Silverbridge. I have been to Mr. Walker. He, at any rate, is very kind."

"I do not want his kindness. I want no man's kindness. Mr. Walker is the attorney, I believe. Kind, indeed!"

"I mean considerate. Josiah, let us do the best we can in this trouble. We have had others as heavy before."

"But none to crush me as this will crush me. Well; what am I to do? Am I to go to prison—to-night?" At this moment his daughter returned with a candle, and the mother could not make her answer at once. It was a wretched, poverty-stricken room. By degrees the carpet had disappeared, which had been laid down some nine or ten years since, when they had first come to Hogglestock, and which even then had not been new. Now nothing but a poor fragment of it remained in front of the fire-place. In the middle of the room there was a table which had once been large; but one flap of it

was gone altogether, and the other flap sloped grievously towards the floor, the weakness of old age having fallen into its legs. There were two or three smaller tables about, but they stood propped against walls, thence obtaining a security which their own strength would not give them. At the further end of the room there was an ancient piece of furniture, which was always called "papa's secretary," at which Mr. Crawley customarily sat and wrote his sermons, and did all work that was done by him within his house. The man who had made it, some time in the last century, had intended it to be a locked guardian for domestic documents, and the receptacle for all that was most private in the house of some paterfamilias. But beneath the hands of Mr. Crawley it always stood open; and with the exception of the small space at which he wrote, was covered with dog's-eared books, from nearly all of which the covers had disappeared. There were there two odd volumes of Euripides, a Greek Testament, an Odyssey, a duodecimo Pindar, and a miniature Anacreon. There was half a Horace,—the two first books of the Odes at the beginning, and the De Arte Poetica at the end having disappeared. There was a little bit of a volume of Cicero, and there were Cæsar's Commentaries, in two volumes, so stoutly bound that they had defied the combined ill-usage of time and the Crawley family. All these were piled upon the secretary, with many others,—odd volumes of sermons and the like; but the Greek and Latin lay at the top, and showed signs of most frequent use. There was one arm-chair in the room,—a Windsor-chair, as such used to be called, made soft by an old cushion in the back, in which Mr. Crawley sat when both he and his wife were in the room, and Mrs. Crawley when he was absent. And there was an old horsehair sofa,—now almost denuded of its horsehair,—but that, like the tables, required the assistance of a friendly wall. Then there was half-a-dozen of other chairs,—all of different sorts,—and they completed the furniture of the room. It was not such a room as one would wish to see inhabited by a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England; but they who know what money will do and what it will not, will understand how easily a man with a family, and with a hundred and thirty pounds a year, may be brought to the need of inhabiting such a chamber. When it is remembered that three pounds of meat a day, at ninepence a pound, will cost over forty pounds a year, there need be no difficulty in understanding that it may be so. Bread

for such a family must cost at least twenty-five pounds. Clothes for five persons, of whom one must at any rate wear the raiment of a gentleman, can hardly be found for less than ten pounds a year a head. Then there remains fifteen pounds for tea, sugar, beer, wages, education, amusements, and the like. In such circumstances a gentleman can hardly pay much for the renewal of his furniture!

Mrs. Crawley could not answer her husband's question before her daughter, and was therefore obliged to make another excuse for again sending her out of the room. "Jane, dear," she said, "bring my things down to the kitchen and I will change them by the fire. I will be there in two minutes, when I have had a word with your papa." The girl went immediately and then Mrs. Crawley answered her husband's question. "No, my dear; there is no question of your going to prison."

"But there will be."

"I have undertaken that you shall attend before the magistrates at Silverbridge on Thursday next, at twelve o'clock. You will do that?"

"Do it! You mean, I suppose, to say that I must go there. Is anybody to come and fetch me?"

"Nobody will come. Only you must promise that you will be there. I have promised for you. You will go; will you not?" She stood leaning over him, half embracing him, waiting for an answer; but for a while he gave none. "You will tell me that you will do what I have undertaken for you, Josiah?"

"I think I would rather that they fetched me. I think that I will not go myself."

"And have policemen come for you into the parish! Mr. Walker has promised that he will send over his phaeton. He sent me home in it to-day."

"I want nobody's phaeton. If I go I will walk. If it were ten times the distance, and though I had not a shoe left to my feet I would walk. If I go there at all, of my own accord, I will walk there."

"But you will go?"

"What do I care for the parish? What matters it who sees me now? I cannot be degraded worse than I am. Everybody knows it."

"There is no disgrace without guilt," said his wife.

"Everybody thinks me guilty. I see it in their eyes. The children

know of it, and I hear their whispers in the school, 'Mr. Crawley has taken some money.' I heard the girl say it myself."

"What matters what the girl says?"

"And yet you would have me go in a fine carriage to Silverbridge, as though to a wedding. If I am wanted there let them take me as they would another. I shall be here for them,—unless I am dead."

At this moment Jane reappeared, pressing her mother to take off her wet clothes, and Mrs. Crawley went with her daughter to the kitchen. The one red-armed young girl who was their only servant was sent away, and then the mother and child discussed how best they might prevail with the head of the family. "But, mamma, it must come right; must it not?"

"I trust it will. I think it will. But I cannot see my way as yet."

"Papa cannot have done anything wrong."

"No, my dear; he has done nothing wrong. He has made great mistakes, and it is hard to make people understand that he has not intentionally spoken untruths. He is ever thinking of other things, about the school, and his sermons, and he does not remember."

"And about how poor we are, mamma."

"He has much to occupy his mind, and he forgets things which dwell in the memory with other people. He said that he had got this money from Mr. Soames, and of course he thought that it was so."

"And where did he get it, mamma?"

"Ah,—I wish I knew. I should have said that I had seen every shilling that came into the house; but I know nothing of this cheque,—whence it came."

"But will not papa tell you?"

"He would tell me if he knew. He thinks it came from the dean."

"And are you sure it did not?"

"Yes; quite sure; as sure as I can be of anything. The dean told me he would give him fifty pounds, and the fifty pounds came. I had them in my own hands. And he has written to say that it was so."

"But couldn't this be part of the fifty pounds?"

"No, dear, no."

"Then where did papa get it? Perhaps he picked it up, and has forgotten?"

To this Mrs. Crawley made no reply. The idea that the cheque had been found by her husband,—had been picked up as Jane had said,

—had occurred also to Jane's mother. Mr. Soames was confident that he had dropped the pocket-book at the parsonage. Mrs. Crawley had always disliked Mr. Soames, thinking him to be hard, cruel, and vulgar. She would not have hesitated to believe him guilty of a falsehood, or even of direct dishonesty, if by so believing she could in her own mind have found the means of reconciling her husband's possession of the cheque with absolute truth on his part. But she could not do so. Even though Soames had, with devilish premeditated malice, slipped the cheque into her husband's pocket, his having done so would not account for her husband's having used the cheque when he found it there. She was driven to make excuses for him which, valid as they might be with herself, could not be valid with others. He had said that Mr. Soames had paid the cheque to him. That was clearly a mistake. He had said that the cheque had been given to him by the dean. That was clearly another mistake. She knew, or thought she knew, that he, being such as he was, might make such blunders as these, and yet be true. She believed that such statements might be blunders and not falsehoods,—so convined was she that her husband's mind would not act at all times as do the minds of other men. But having such a conviction she was driven to believe also that almost anything might be possible. Soames may have been right, or he might have dropped, not the book, but the cheque. She had no difficulty in presuming Soames to be wrong in any detail, if by so supposing she could make the exculpation of her husband easier to herself. If villany on the part of Soames was needful to her theory, Soames would become to her a villain at once,—of the blackest dye. Might it not be possible that the cheque having thus fallen into her husband's hands, he had come, after a while, to think that it had been sent to him by his friend, the dean? And if it were so, would it be possible to make others so believe? That there was some mistake which would be easily explained were her husband's mind lucid at all points, but which she could not explain because of the darkness of his mind, she was thoroughly convinced. But were she herself to put forward such a defence on her husband's part, she would, in doing so, be driven to say that he was a lunatic,—that he was incapable of managing the affairs of himself or his family. It seemed to her that she would be compelled to have him proved to be either a thief or a madman. And yet she knew that he was neither. That he was not a thief was as clear to her

as the sun at noonday. Could she have lain on the man's bosom for twenty years, and not yet have learned the secrets of the heart beneath? The whole mind of the man was, as she told herself, within her grasp. He might have taken the twenty pounds; he might have taken it and spent it, though it was not his own; but yet he was no thief. Nor was he a madman. No man more sane in preaching the gospel of his Lord, in making intelligible to the ignorant the promises of his Saviour, ever got into a parish pulpit, or taught in a parish school. The intellect of the man was as clear as running water in all things not appertaining to his daily life and its difficulties. He could be logical with a vengeance,—so logical as to cause infinite trouble to his wife, who, with all her good sense, was not logical. And he had Greek at his fingers' ends,—as his daughter knew very well. And even to this day he would sometimes recite to them English poetry, lines after lines, stanzas upon stanzas, in a sweet low melancholy voice, on long winter evenings when occasionally the burden of his troubles would be lighter to him than was usual. Books in Latin and in French he read with as much ease as in English, and took delight in such as came to him, when he would condescend to accept such loans from the deanery. And there was at times a lightness of heart about the man. In the course of the last winter he had translated into Greek irregular verse the very noble ballad of Lord Bateman, maintaining the rhythm and the rhyme, and had repeated it with uncouth glee till his daughter knew it all by heart. And when there had come to him a five-pound note from some admiring magazine editor as the price of the same,—still through the dean's hands,—he had brightened up his heart, and had thought for an hour or two that even yet the world would smile upon him. His wife knew well that he was not mad; but yet she knew that there were dark moments with him, in which his mind was so much astray that he could not justly be called to account as to what he might remember and what he might forget. How would it be possible to explain all this to a judge and jury, so that they might neither say that he was dishonest, nor yet that he was mad? "Perhaps he picked it up, and had forgotten," her daughter said to her. Perhaps it was so, but she might not as yet admit as much even to her child.

"It is a mystery, dear, as yet, which, with God's aid, will be unravelled. Of one thing we at least may be sure; that your papa has not wilfully done anything wrong."

"Of course we are sure of that, mamma."

Mrs. Crawley had many troubles during the next four or five days, of which the worst, perhaps, had reference to the services of the Sunday which intervened between the day of her visit to Silverbridge, and the sitting of the magistrates. On the Saturday it was necessary that he should prepare his sermons, of which he preached two on every Sunday, though his congregation consisted only of farmers, brickmakers, and agricultural labourers who would willingly have dispensed with the second. Mrs. Crawley proposed to send over to Mr. Robarts, a neighbouring clergyman, for the loan of a curate. Mr. Robarts was a warm friend to the Crawleys, and in such an emergency would probably have come himself; but Mr. Crawley would not hear of it. The discussion took place early on the Saturday morning, before it was as yet daylight, for the poor woman was thinking day and night of her husband's troubles, and it had this good effect, that immediately after breakfast he seated himself at his desk, and worked at his task as though he had forgotten all else in the world.

And on the Sunday morning he went into his school before the hour of the church service, as had been his wont, and taught there as though everything with him was as usual. Some of the children were absent, having heard of their teacher's tribulation, and having been told probably that he would remit his work; and for these absent ones he sent in great anger. The poor bairns came creeping in, for he was a man who by his manners had been able to secure their obedience in spite of his poverty. And he preached to the people of his parish on that Sunday, as he had always preached; eagerly, clearly, with an eloquence fitted for the hearts of such an audience. No one would have guessed from his tones and gestures and appearance on that occasion, that there was aught wrong with him,—unless there had been there some observer keen enough to perceive that the greater care which he used, and the special eagerness of his words, denoted a special frame of mind.

After that, after those church services were over, he sank again, and never roused himself till the dreaded day had come.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT THE WORLD THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

Opinion in Silverbridge, at Barchester, and throughout the county, was very much divided as to the guilt or innocence of Mr. Crawley. Up to the time of Mrs. Crawley's visit to Silverbridge, the affair had not been much discussed. To give Mr. Soames his due, he had been by no means anxious to press the matter against the clergyman; but he had been forced to go on with it. While the first cheque was missing Lord Lufton had sent him a second cheque for the money, and the loss had thus fallen upon his lordship. The cheque had of course been traced, and inquiry had of course been made as to Mr. Crawley's possession of it. When that gentleman declared that he had received it from Mr. Soames, Mr. Soames had been forced to contradict and to resent such an assertion. When Mr. Crawley had afterwards said that the money had come to him from the dean, and when the dean had shown that this also was untrue, Mr. Soames, confident as he was that he had dropped the pocket-book at Mr. Crawley's house, could not but continue the investigation. He had done so with as much silence as the nature of the work admitted. But by the day of the magistrates' meeting at Silverbridge the subject had become common through the county, and men's minds were very much divided.

All Hogglestock believed their parson to be innocent; but then all Hogglestock believed him to be mad. At Silverbridge the tradesmen with whom he had dealt, and to whom he had owed and still owed, money, all declared him to be innocent. They knew something of the man personally, and could not believe him to be a thief. All the ladies in Silverbridge, too, were sure of his innocence. It was to them impossible that such a man should have stolen twenty pounds. "My dear," said the eldest Miss Prettyman to poor Grace Crawley, "in England, where the laws are good, no gentleman is ever made out to be

guilty when he is innocent; and your papa, of course, is innocent. Therefore you should not trouble yourself." "It will break papa's heart," Grace had said, and she did trouble herself. But the gentlemen in Silverbridge were made of sterner stuff, and believed the man to be guilty, clergymen and gentleman though he was. Mr. Walker, who among the lights in Silverbridge was the leading light, would not speak a word upon the subject to anybody; and then everybody, who was anybody, knew that Mr. Walker was convinced of the man's guilt. Had Mr. Walker believed him to be innocent, his tongue would have been ready enough. John Walker, who was in the habit of laughing at his father's good nature, had no doubt upon the subject. Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Walker's partner, shook his head. People did not think much of Mr. Winthrop, excepting certain unmarried ladies; for Mr. Winthrop was a bachelor, and had plenty of money. People did not think much of Mr. Winthrop; but still on this subject he might know something, and when he shook his head he manifestly intended to indicate guilt. And Dr. Tempest, the rector of Silverbridge, did not hesitate to declare his belief in the guilt of the incumbent of Hogglestock. No man reverences a clergyman, as a clergyman, so slightly as a brother clergyman. To Dr. Tempest it appeared to be neither very strange nor very terrible that Mr. Crawley should have stolen twenty pounds. "What is a man to do," he said, "when he sees his children starving? He should not have married on such a preferment as that." Mr. Crawley had married, however, long before he got the living of Hogglestock.

There were two Lady Luftons,—mother-in-law and daughter-in-law,—who at this time were living together at Framley Hall, Lord Lufton's seat in the county of Barset, and they were both thoroughly convinced of Mr. Crawley's innocence. The elder lady had lived much among clergymen, and could hardly, I think, by any means have been brought to believe in the guilt of any man who had taken upon himself the orders of the Church of England. She had also known Mr. Crawley personally for some years, and was one of those who could not admit to herself that any one was vile who had been near to herself. She believed intensely in the wickedness of the outside world, of the world which was far away from herself, and of which she never saw anything; but they who were near to her, and who had even become dear to her, or who even had been respected by her, were made, as it were, saints in her imagination. They were brought into the inner circle, and could hardly

be expelled. She was an old woman who thought all evil of those she did not know, and all good of those whom she did know; and as she did know Mr. Crawley, she was quite sure he had not stolen Mr. Soames's twenty pounds. She did know Mr. Soames also; and thus there was a mystery for the unravelling of which she was very anxious. And the young Lady Lufton was equally sure, and perhaps with better reason for such certainty. She had, in truth, known more of Mr. Crawley personally, than had any one in the county, unless it was the dean. The younger Lady Lufton, the present Lord Lufton's wife, had sojourned at one time in Mr. Crawley's house, amidst the Crawley poverty, living as they lived, and nursing Mrs. Crawley through an illness which had well nigh been fatal to her; and the younger Lady Lufton believed in Mr. Crawley;—as Mr. Crawley also believed in her.

"It is quite impossible, my dear," the old woman said to her daughter-in-law.

"Quite impossible, my lady." The dowager was always called "my lady," both by her own daughter and by her son's wife except in the presence of their children, when she was addressed as "grandmamma." "Think how well I knew him. It's no use talking of evidence. No evidence would make me believe it."

"Nor me; and I think it a great shame that such a report should be spread about.

"I suppose Mr. Soames could not help himself?" said the younger lady, who was not herself very fond of Mr. Soames.

"Ludovic says that he has only done what he was obliged to do." The Ludovic spoken of was Lord Lufton.

This took place in the morning; but in the evening the affair was again discussed at Framley Hall. Indeed, for some days, there was hardly any other subject held to be worthy of discussion in the county. Mr. Robarts, the clergyman of the parish and the brother of the younger Lady Lufton, was dining at the hall with his wife, and the three ladies had together expressed their perfect conviction of the falseness of the accusation. But when Lord Lufton and Mr. Robarts were together after the ladies had left them there was much less of this certainty expressed. "By Jove," said Lord Lufton, "I don't know what to think of it. I wish with all my heart that Soames had said nothing about it, and that the cheque had passed without remark."

"That was impossible. When the banker sent to Soames, he was obliged to take the matter up."

"Of course he was. But I'm sorry that it was so. For the life of me I can't conceive how the cheque got into Crawley's hands."

"I imagine that it had been lying in the house, and that Crawley had come to think that it was his own."

"But, my dear Mark," said Lord Lufton, "excuse me if I say that that's nonsense. What do we do when a poor man has come to think that another man's property is his own? We send him to prison for making the mistake."

"I hope they won't send Crawley to prison."

"I hope so too; but what is a jury to do?"

"You think it will go to a jury, then?"

"I do," said Lord Lufton. "I don't see how the magistrates can save themselves from committing him. It is one of those cases in which every one concerned would wish to drop it if it were only possible. But it is not possible. On the evidence, as one sees it at present, one is bound to say that it is a case for a jury."

"I believe that he is mad," said the brother parson.

"He always was, as far as I could learn," said the lord. "I never knew him, myself. You do, I think?"

"Oh, yes. I know him." And the vicar of Framley became silent and thoughtful as the memory of a certain interview between himself and Mr. Crawley came back upon his mind. At that time the waters had nearly closed over his head, and Mr. Crawley had given him some help in his way. When the gentlemen had again found the ladies, they kept their own doubts to themselves; for at Framley Hall, as at present tenanted, female voices and female influences predominated over those which came from the other sex.

At Barchester, the cathedral city of the county in which the Crawleys lived, opinion was violently against Mr. Crawley. In the city Mrs. Proudie, the wife of the bishop, was the leader of opinion in general, and she was very strong in her belief of the man's guilt. She had known much of clergymen all her life, as it behoved a bishop's wife to do, and she had none of that mingled weakness and ignorance which taught so many ladies in Barsetshire to suppose that an ordained clergyman could not become a thief. She hated old Lady Lufton with all her heart, and old Lady Lufton hated her as warmly. Mrs. Proudie

would say frequently that Lady Lufton was a conceited old idiot, and Lady Lufton would declare as frequently that Mrs. Proudie was a vulgar virago. It was known at the palace in Barchester that kindness had been shown to the Crawleys by the family at Framley Hall, and this alone would have been sufficient to make Mrs. Proudie believe that Mr. Crawley could have been guilty of any crime. And as Mrs. Proudie believed, so did the bishop believe. "It is a terrible disgrace to the diocese," said the bishop, shaking his head, and patting his apron as he sat by his study fire.

"Fiddlestick!" said Mrs. Proudie.

"But, my dear,—a beneficed clergyman!"

"You must get rid of him; that's all. You must be firm whether he be acquitted or convicted."

"But if he be acquitted, I cannot get rid of him, my dear."

"Yes, you can, if you are firm. And you must be firm. Is it not true that he has been disgracefully involved in debt ever since he has been there; that you have been pestered by letters from unfortunate tradesmen who cannot get their money from him?"

"That is true, my dear, certainly."

"And is that kind of thing to go on? He cannot come to the palace as all clergymen should do, because he has got no clothes to come in. I saw him once about the lanes, and I never set my eyes on such an object in my life! I would not believe that the man was a clergyman till John told me. He is a disgrace to the diocese, and he must be got rid of. I feel sure of his guilt, and I hope he will be convicted. But if he escape conviction, you must sequestrate the living because of the debts. The income is enough to get an excellent curate. It would just do for Thumble." To all of which the bishop made no further reply, but simply nodded his head and patted his apron. He knew that he could not do exactly what his wife required of him; but if it should so turn out that poor Crawley was found to be guilty, then the matter would be comparatively easy.

"It should be an example to us, that we should look to our own steps, my dear," said the bishop.

"That's all very well," said Mrs. Proudie, "but it has become your duty, and mine too, to look to the steps of other people; and that duty we must do."

"Of course, my dear; of course." That was the tone in which

the question of Mr. Crawley's alleged guilt was discussed at the palace.

We have already heard what was said on the subject at the house of Archdeacon Grantly. As the days passed by, and as other tidings came in, confirmatory of those which had before reached him, the archdeacon felt himself unable not to believe in the man's guilt. And the fear which he entertained as to his son's intended marriage with Grace Crawley tended to increase the strength of his belief. Dr. Grantly had been a very successful man in the world, and on all ordinary occasions had been able to show that bold front with which success endows a man. But he still had his moments of weakness, and feared greatly lest anything of misfortune should touch him, and mar the comely roundness of his prosperity. He was very wealthy. The wife of his bosom had been to him all that a wife should be. His reputation in the clerical world stood very high. He had lived all his life on terms of equality with the best of the gentry around him. His only daughter had made a splendid marriage. His two sons had hitherto done well in the world, not only as regarded their happiness, but as to marriage also, and as to social standing. But how great would be the fall if his son should at last marry the daughter of a convicted thief! How would the Proudies rejoice over him,—the Proudies who had been crushed to the ground by the success of the Hartletop alliance; and how would the low-church curates who swarmed in Barsetshire, gather together and scream in delight over his dismay! "But why should we say that he is guilty?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"It hardly matters as far as we are concerned, whether they find him guilty or not," said the archdeacon. "If Henry marries that girl my heart will be broken."

But perhaps to no one except to the Crawleys themselves had the matter caused so much terrible anxiety as to the archdeacon's son. He had told his father that he had made no offer of marriage to Grace Crawley, and he had told the truth. But there are perhaps few men who make such offers in direct terms without having already said and done that which makes such offers simply necessary as the final closing of an accepted bargain. It was so at any rate between Major Grantly and Miss Crawley, and Major Grantly acknowledged to himself that it was so. He acknowledged also to himself that as regarded Grace herself he had no wish to get back from his implied intentions. Nothing

that either his father or mother might say would shake him in that. But could it be his duty to bind himself to the family of a convicted thief? Could it be right that he should disgrace his father and his mother and his sister and his one child by such a connection? He had a man's heart, and the poverty of the Crawleys caused him no solicitude. But he shrank from the contamination of a prison.

CHAPTER VI.

GRACE CRAWLEY.

It has already been said that Grace Crawley was at this time living with the two Miss Prettymans, who kept a girls' school at Silverbridge. Two more benignant ladies than the Miss Prettymans never presided over such an establishment. The younger was fat, and fresh, and fair, and seemed to be always running over with the milk of human kindness. The other was very thin and very small, and somewhat afflicted with bad health;—was weak, too, in the eyes, and subject to racking headaches, so that it was considered generally that she was unable to take much active part in the education of the pupils. But it was considered as generally that she did all the thinking, that she knew more than any other woman in Barsetshire, and that all the Prettyman schemes for education emanated from her mind. It was said, too, by those who knew them best, that her sister's good-nature was as nothing to hers; that she was the most charitable, the most loving, and the most conscientious of schoolmistresses. This was Miss Annabella Prettyman, the elder; and perhaps it may be inferred that some portion of her great character for virtue may have been due to the fact that nobody ever saw her out of her own house. She could not even go to church because the open air brought on neuralgia. She was therefore perhaps taken to be magnificent, partly because she was unknown. Miss Anne Prettyman, the younger, went about frequently to tea-

parties,—would go, indeed, to any party to which she might be invited, and was known to have a pleasant taste for pound-cake and sweetmeats. Being seen so much in the outer world, she became common, and her character did not stand so high as did that of her sister. Some people were ill-natured enough to say that she wanted to marry Mr. Winthrop; but of what maiden lady that goes out into the world are not such stories told? And all such stories in Silverbridge were told with special reference to Mr. Winthrop.

Miss Crawley, at present, lived with the Miss Prettymans and assisted them in the school. This arrangement had been going on for the last twelve months, since the time in which Grace would have left the school in the natural course of things. There had been no bargain made, and no intention that Grace should stay. She had been invited to fill the place of an absent superintendent, first for one month, then for another, and then for two more months; and when the assistant came back, the Miss Prettymans thought there were reasons why Grace should be asked to remain a little longer. But they took great care to let the fashionable world of Silverbridge know that Grace Crawley was a visitor with them, and not a teacher. "We pay her no salary, or anything of that kind," said Miss Anne Prettyman; a statemant, however, which was by no means true, for during those four months the regular stipend had been paid to her; and twice since then, Miss Annabella Prettyman, who managed all the money matters, had called Grace into her little room, and had made a little speech, and had put a little bit of paper into her hand. "I know I ought not to take it," Grace had said to her friend Anne. "If I was not here, there would be no one in my place." "Nonsense, my dear," Anne Prettyman had said; "it is the greatest comfort to us in the world. And you should make yourself nice, you know, for his sake. All the gentlemen like it." Then Grace had been very angry and had sworn that she would give the money back again. Nevertheless, I think she did make herself as nice as she knew how to do. And from all this it may be seen that the Miss Prettymans had hitherto quite approved of Major Grantly's attentions.

But when this terrible affair came on about the cheque which had been lost and found and traced to Mr. Crawley's hands, Miss Anne Prettyman said nothing further to Grace Crawley about Major Grantly. It was not that she thought that Mr. Crawley was guilty, but she knew

enough of the world to be aware that suspicion of such guilt might compel such a man as Major Grantly to change his mind. "If he had only popped," Anne said to her sister, "it would have been all right. He would never have gone back from his word." "My dear," said Annabella, "I wish you would not talk about popping. It is a terrible word." "I shouldn't, to any one except you," said Anne.

There had come to Silverbridge some few months since, on a visit to Mrs. Walker, a young lady from Allington, in the neighbouring county, between whom and Grace Crawley there had grown up from circumstances a warm friendship. Grace had a cousin in London,—a clerk high up and well-to-do in a public office, a nephew of her mother's,—and this cousin was, and for years had been, violently smitten in love for this young lady. But the young lady's tale had been sad, and though she acknowledged feelings of most affectionate friendship for the cousin, she could not bring herself to acknowledge more. Grace Crawley had met the young lady at Silverbridge, and words had been spoken about the cousin; and though the young lady from Allington was some years older than Grace, there had grown up to be a friendship, and, as is not uncommon between young ladies, there had been an agreement that they would correspond. The name of the lady was Miss Lily Dale, and the name of the well-to-do cousin in London was Mr. John Eames.

At the present moment Miss Dale was at home with her mother at Allington, and Grace Crawley in her terrible sorrow wrote to her friend, pouring out her whole heart. As Grace's letter and Miss Dale's answer will assist us in our story, I will venture to give them both.

"Silverbridge, —— December, 186–.

"DEAREST LILY,

"I HARDLY know how to tell you what has happened, it is so very terrible. But perhaps you will have heard it already, as everybody is talking of it here. It has got into the newspapers, and therefore it cannot be kept secret. Not that I should keep anything from you; only this is so very dreadful that I hardly know how to write it. Somebody says,—a Mr. Soames, I believe it is,—that papa has taken some money that does not belong to him, and he is to be brought before the magistrates and tried. Of course, papa has done nothing wrong. I do think he would be the last man in the world to take a

penny that did not belong to him. You know how poor he is; what a life he has had! But I think he would almost sooner see mamma starving;—I am sure he would rather be starved himself, than even borrow a shilling which he could not pay. To suppose that he would take money" (she had tried to write the word "steal," but she could not bring her pen to form the letters) "is monstrous. But, somehow, the circumstances have been made to look bad against him, and they say that he must come over here to the magistrates. I often think that of all men in the world papa is the most unfortunate. Everything seems to go against him, and yet he is so good! Poor mamma has been over here, and she is distracted. I never saw her so wretched before. She had been to your friend, Mr. Walker, and came to me afterwards for a minute. Mr. Walker has got something to do with it, though mamma says she thinks he is quite friendly to papa. I wonder whether you could find out, through Mr. Walker, what he thinks about it. Of course, mamma knows that papa has done nothing wrong; but she says that the whole thing is most mysterious, and that she does not know how to account for the money. Papa, you know, is not like other people. He forgets things; and is always thinking, thinking, thinking of his great misfortunes. Poor papa! My heart bleeds so when I remember all his sorrows, that I hate myself for thinking about myself.

"When mamma left me,—and it was then I first knew that papa would really have to be tried,—I went to Miss Annabella, and told her that I would go home. She asked me why, and I said I would not disgrace her house by staying in it. She got up and took me in her arms, and there came a tear out of both her dear old eyes, and she said that if anything evil came to papa,—which she would not believe, as she knew him to be a good man,—there should be a home in her house not only for me, but for mamma and Jane. Isn't she a wonderful woman? When I think of her, I sometimes think that she must be an angel already. Then she became very serious,—for just before, through her tears, she had tried to smile,—and she told me to remember that all people could not be like her, who had nobody to look to but herself and her sister; and that at present I must task myself not to think of that which I had been thinking of before. She did not mention anybody's name, but of course I understood very well what she meant; and I suppose she is right. I said nothing in answer to

her, for I could not speak. She was holding my hand, and I took hers up and kissed it, to show her, if I could, that I knew that she was right; but I could not have spoken about it for all the world. It was not ten days since that she herself, with all her prudence, told me that she thought I ought to make up my mind what answer I would give him. And then I did not say anything; but of course she knew. And after that Miss Anne spoke quite freely about it, so that I had to beg her to be silent even before the girls. You know how imprudent she is. But it is all over now. Of course Miss Annabella is right. He has got a great many people to think of; his father and mother, and his darling little Edith, whom he brought here twice, and left her with us once for two days, so that she got to know me quite well; and I took such a love for her, that I could not bear to part with her. But I think sometimes that all our family are born to be unfortunate, and then I tell myself that I will never hope for anything again.

"Pray write to me soon. I feel as though nothing on earth could comfort me, and yet I shall like to have your letter. Dear, dear Lily, I am not even yet so wretched but what I shall rejoice to be told good news of you. If it only could be as John wishes it! And why should it not? It seems to me that nobody has a right or a reason to be unhappy except us. Good-bye, dearest Lily.

"Your affectionate friend,

"GRACE CRAWLEY."

"P.S.—I think I have made up my mind that I will go back to Hogglestock at once if the magistrates decide against papa. I think I should be doing the school harm if I were to stay here."

The answer to this letter did not reach Miss Crawley till after the magistrates' meeting on the Thursday, but it will be better for our story that it should be given here than postponed until the result of that meeting shall have been told. Miss Dale's anwer was as follows:—

"Allington, —— December, 186-.

"DEAR GRACE,

"YOUR letter has made me very unhappy. If it can at all comfort you to know that mamma and I sympathize with you altogether, of that you may at any rate be sure. But in such troubles

nothing will give comfort. They must be borne till the fire of misfortune burns itself out.

"I had heard about the affair a day or two before I got your note. Our clergyman, Mr. Boyce, told us of it. Of course we all know that the charge must be altogether unfounded, and mamma says that the truth will be sure to show itself at last. But that conviction does not cure the evil, and I can well understand that your father should suffer grievously; and I pity your mother quite as much as I do him.

"As for Major Grantly, if he be such a man as I took him to be from the little I saw of him, all this would make no difference to him. I am sure that it ought to make none. Whether it should not make a difference in you is another question. I think it should; and I think your answer to him should be that you could not even consider any such proposition while your father was in so great trouble. I am so much older than you, and seem to have had so much experience, that I do not scruple, as you will see, to come down upon you with all the weight of my wisdom.

"About that other subject I had rather say nothing. I have known your cousin all my life, almost; and I regard no one more kindly than I do him. When I think of my friends, he is always one of the dearest. But when one thinks of going beyond friendship, even if one tries to do so, there are so many barriers!

"Your affectionate friend,

"LILY DALE.

"Mamma bids me say that she would be delighted to have you here whenever it might suit you to come; and I add to this message my entreaty that you will come at once. You say that you think you ought to leave Miss Prettyman's for a while. I can well understand your feeling; but as your sister is with your mother, surely you had better come to us,—I mean quite at once. I will not scruple to tell you what mamma says, because I know your good sense. She says that as the interest of the school may possibly be concerned, and as you have no regular engagement, she thinks you ought to leave Silverbridge; but she says that it will be better that you come to us than that you should go home. If you went home, people might say that you had left in some sort of disgrace. Come to us, and when all this has been put right, then you go back to Silverbridge; and then, if a

certain person speaks again, you can make a different answer. Mamma quite understands that you are to come; so you have only got to ask your own mamma, and come at once."

This letter, as the reader will understand, did not reach Grace Crawley till after the all-important Thursday; but before that day had come round, Grace had told Miss Prettyman,—had told both the Miss Prettymans,—that she was resolved to leave them. She had done this without even consulting her mother, driven to it by various motives. She knew that her father's conduct was being discussed by the girls in the school, and that things were said of him which it could not but be for the disadvantage of Miss Prettyman that any one should say of a teacher in her establishment. She felt, too, that she could not hold up her head in Silverbridge in these days, as it would become her to do if she retained her position. She did struggle gallantly, and succeeded much more nearly than she was herself aware. She was all but able to carry herself as though no terrible accusation was being made against her father. Of the struggle, however, she was not herself the less conscious, and she told herself that on that account also she must go. And then she must go also because of Major Grantly. Whether he was minded to come and speak to her that one other needed word, or whether he was not so minded, it would be better that she should be away from Silverbridge. If he spoke it she could only answer him by a negative; and if he were minded not to speak it, would it not be better that she should leave herself the power of thinking that his silence had been caused by her absence, and not by his coldness or indifference?

She asked, therefore, for an interview with Miss Prettyman, and was shown into the elder sister's room, at eleven o'clock on the Tuesday morning. The elder Miss Prettyman never came into the school herself till twelve, but was in the habit of having interviews with the young ladies,—which were sometimes very awful in their nature,—during the two previous hours. During these interviews an immense amount of business was done, and the fortunes in life of some girls were said to have been there made or marred; as when, for instance, Miss Crimpton had been advised to stay at home with her uncle in England, instead of going out with her sisters to India, both of which sisters were married within three months of their landing at Bombay. The way

in which she gave her counsel on such occasions was very efficacious. No one knew better than Miss Prettyman that a cock can crow most effectively in his own farmyard, and therefore all crowing intended to be effective was done by her within the shrine of her own peculiar room.

"Well, my dear, what is it?" she said to Grace. "Sit in the arm-chair, my dear, and we can then talk comfortably." The teachers, when they were closeted with Miss Prettyman, were always asked to sit in the arm-chair, whereas a small, straight-backed, uneasy chair was kept for the use of the young ladies. And there was, too, a stool of repentance, out against the wall, very uncomfortable indeed for young ladies who had not behaved themselves so prettily as young ladies generally do.

Grace seated herself, and then began her speech very quickly. "Miss Prettyman," she said, "I have made up my mind that I will go home, if you please."

"And why should you go home, Grace? Did I not tell you that you should have a home here?" Miss Prettyman had weak eyes, and was very small, and had never possessed any claim to be called good-looking. And she assumed nothing of majestical awe from any adornment or studied amplification of the outward woman by means of impressive trappings. The possessor of an unobservant eye might have called her a mean-looking little old woman. And certainly there would have been nothing awful in her to any one who came across her otherwise than as a lady having authority in her own school. But within her own precincts, she did know how to surround herself with a dignity which all felt who approached her there. Grace Crawley, as she heard the simple question which Miss Prettyman had asked, unconsciously acknowledged the strength of the woman's manner. She already stood rebuked for having proposed a plan so ungracious, so unnecessary, and so unwise.

"I think I ought to be with mamma at present," said Grace.

"Your mother has your sister with her."

"Yes, Miss Prettyman; Jane is there."

"If there be no other reason, I cannot think that that can be held to be a reason now. Of course your mother would like to have you always; unless you should be married,—but then there are reasons why this should not be so."

"Of course there are."

"I do not think,—that is, if I know all that there is to be known,—I do not think, I say, that there can be any good ground for your leaving us now,—just now."

Then Grace sat silent for a moment, gathering her courage, and collecting her words; and after that she spoke. "It is because of papa, and because of this charge——"

"But, Grace——"

"I know what you are going to say, Miss Prettyman;—that is, I think I know."

"If you will hear me, you may be sure that you know."

"But I want you to hear me for one moment first. I beg your pardon, Miss Prettyman; I do indeed, but I want to say this before you go on. I must go home, and I know I ought. We are all disgraced, and I won't stop here to disgrace the school. I know papa has done nothing wrong; but nevertheless we are disgraced. The police are to bring him in here on Thursday, and everybody in Silverbridge will know it. It cannot be right that I should be here teaching in the school, while it is all going on;—and I won't. And, Miss Prettyman, I couldn't do it,—indeed I couldn't. I can't bring myself to think of anything I am doing. Indeed I can't; and then, Miss Prettyman, there are other reasons." By the time that she had proceeded thus far, Grace Crawley's words were nearly choked by her tears.

"And what are the other reasons, Grace?"

"I don't know," said Grace, struggling to speak through her tears.

"But I know," said Miss Prettyman. "I know them all. I know all your reasons, and I tell you that in my opinion you ought to remain where you are, and not go away. The very reasons which to you are reasons for your going, to me are reasons for your remaining here."

"I can't remain. I am determined to go. I don't mind you and Miss Anne, but I can't bear to have the girls looking at me, and the servants."

Then Miss Prettyman paused awhile, thinking what words of wisdom would be most appropriate in the present conjuncture. But words of wisdom did not seem to come easily to her, having for the moment been banished by tenderness of heart. "Come here, my love," she said at last. "Come here, Grace" Slowly Grace got up from her

seat and came round, and stood by Miss Prettyman's elbow. Miss Prettyman pushed her chair a little back, and pushed herself a little forward, and stretching out one hand, placed her arm round Grace's waist, and with the other took hold of Grace's hand, and thus drew her down and kissed the girl's forehead and lips. And then Grace found herself kneeling at her friend's feet. "Grace," she said, "do you not know that I love you? Do you not know that I love you dearly?" In answer to this, Grace kissed the withered hand she held in hers, while the warm tears trickled down upon Miss Prettyman's knuckles. "I love you as though you were my own," exclaimed the schoolmistress; "and will you not trust me, that I know what is best for you?"

"I must go home," said Grace.

"Of course you shall, if you think it right at last; but let us talk of it. No one in this house, you know, has the slightest suspicion that your father has done anything that is in the least dishonourable."

"I know that you have not."

"No, nor has Anne." Miss Prettyman said this as though no one in that house beyond herself and her sister had a right to have any opinion on any subject.

"I know that," said Grace.

"Well, my dear. If we think so——"

"But the servants, Miss Prettyman?"

"If any servant in this house says a word to offend you, I'll—I'll——"

"They don't say anything, Miss Prettyman, but they look. Indeed I'd better go home. Indeed I had!"

"Do not you think your mother has cares enough upon her, and burden enough, without having another mouth to feed, and another head to shelter. You haven't thought of that, Grace!"

"Yes, I have."

"And as for the work, whilst you are not quite well you shall not be troubled with teaching. I have some old papers that want copying and settling, and you shall sit here and do that just for an employment. Anne knows that I've long wanted to have it done, and I'll tell her that you've kindly promised to do it for me."

"No; no; no," said Grace; "I must go home." She was still kneeling at Miss Prettyman's knee, and still holding Miss Prettyman's

hand. And then, at that moment, there came a tap at the door, gentle but yet not humble, a tap which acknowledged, on the part of the tapper, the supremacy in that room of the lady who was sitting there, but which still claimed admittance almost as a right. The tap was well known by both of them to be the tap of Miss Anne. Grace immediately jumped up, and Miss Prettyman settled herself in her chair with a motion which almost seemed to indicate some feeling of shame as to her late position.

"I suppose I may come in?" said Miss Anne, opening the door and inserting her head.

"Yes, you may come in,—if you have anything to say," said Miss Prettyman, with an air which seemed to be intended to assert her supremacy. But, in truth, she was simply collecting the wisdom and dignity which had been somewhat dissipated by her tenderness.

"I did not know that Grace Crawley was here," said Miss Anne.

"Grace Crawley is here," said Miss Prettyman.

"What is the matter, Grace?" said Miss Anne, seeing the tears.

"Never mind now," said Miss Prettyman.

"Poor dear, I'm sure I'm sorry as though she were my own sister," said Anne. "But, Annabella, I want to speak to you especially."

"To me, in private?"

"Yes, to you; in private, if Grace won't mind?"

Then Grace prepared to go. But as she was going, Miss Anne, upon whose brow a heavy burden of thought was lying, stopped her suddenly. "Grace, my dear," she said, "go upstairs into your room, will you?—not across the hall to the school."

"And why shouldn't she go to the school?" said Miss Prettyman.

Miss Anne paused a moment, and then answered,—unwillingly, as though driven to make a reply which she knew to be indiscreet. "Because there is somebody in the hall."

"Go to your room, dear," said Miss Prettyman. And Grace went to her room, never turning an eye down towards the hall. "Who is it?" said Miss Prettyman.

"Major Grantly is here, asking to see you," said Miss Anne.

CHAPTER VII.

MISS PRETTYMAN'S PRIVATE ROOM.

MAJOR GRANTLY, when threatened by his father with pecuniary punishment, should he demean himself by such a marriage as that he had proposed to himself, had declared that he would offer his hand to Miss Crawley on the next morning. This, however, he had not done. He had not done it, partly because he did not quite believe his father's threat, and partly because he felt that that threat was almost justified,—for the present moment,—by the circumstances in which Grace Crawley's father had placed himself. Henry Grantly acknowledged, as he drove himself home on the morning after his dinner at the rectory, that in this matter of his marriage he did owe much to his family. Should he marry at all, he owed it to them to marry a lady. And Grace Crawley, —so he told himself,—was a lady. And he owed it to them to bring among them as his wife a woman who should not disgrace him or them by her education, manners, or even by her personal appearance. In all these respects Grace Crawley was, in his judgment, quite as good as they had a right to expect her to be, and in some respects a great deal superior to that type of womanhood with which they had been most generally conversant. "If everybody had her due, my sister isn't fit to hold a candle to her," he said to himself. It must be acknowledged, therefore, that he was really in love with Grace Crawley. And he declared to himself, over and over again, that his family had no right to demand that he should marry a woman with money. The archdeacon's son by no means despised money. How could he, having come forth as a bird fledged from such a nest as the rectory at Plumstead Episcopi? Before he had been brought by his better nature and true judgment to see that Grace Crawley was the greater woman of the two, he had nearly submitted himself to the twenty thousand pounds of Miss Emily Dunstable,—to that, and her good-humour and rosy

freshness combined. But he regarded himself as the well-to-do son of a very rich father. His only child was amply provided for; and he felt that, as regarded money, he had a right to do as he pleased. He felt this with double strength after his father's threat.

But he had no right to make a marriage by which his family would be disgraced. Whether he was right or wrong in supposing that he would disgrace his family were he to marry the daughter of a convicted thief, it is hardly necessary to discuss here. He told himself that it would be so,—telling himself also that, by the stern laws of the world, the son and the daughter must pay for the offence of the father and the mother. Even among the poor, who would willingly marry the child of a man who had been hanged? But he carried the argument beyond this, thinking much of the matter, and endeavouring to think of it not only justly, but generously. If the accusation against Crawley were false,—if the man were being injured by an unjust charge,—even if he, Grantly, could make himself think that the girl's father had not stolen the money, then he would dare everything and go on. I do not know that his argument was good, or that his mind was logical in the matter He ought to have felt that his own judgment as to the man's guilt was less likely to be correct than that of those whose duty it was and would be to form and to express a judgment on the matter; and as to Grace herself, she was equally innocent whether her father were guilty or not guilty. If he were to be debarred from asking her for her hand by his feelings for his father and mother, he should hardly have trusted to his own skill in ascertaining the real truth as to the alleged theft. But he was not logical, and thus, meaning to be generous, he became unjust.

He found that among those in Silverbridge whom he presumed to be best informed on such matters, there was a growing opinion that Mr. Crawley had stolen the money. He was intimate with all the Walkers, and was able to find out that Mrs. Walker knew that her husband believed in the clergyman's guilt. He was by no means alone in his willingness to accept Mr. Walker's opinion as the true opinion. Silverbridge, generally, was endeavouring to dress itself in Mr. Walker's glass, and to believe as Mr. Walker believed. The ladies of Silverbridge, including the Miss Prettymans, were aware that Mr. Walker had been very kind both to Mr. and Mrs. Crawley, and argued from this that Mr. Walker must think the man to be innocent. But Henry

Grantly, who did not dare to ask a direct question of the solicitor, went cunningly to work, and closeted himself with Mrs. Walker,—with Mrs. Walker, who knew well of the good fortune which was hovering over Grace's head and was so nearly settling itself upon her shoulders. She would have given a finger to be able to whitewash Mr. Crawley in the major's estimation. Nor must it be supposed that she told the major in plain words that her husband had convinced himself of the man's guilt. In plain words no question was asked between them, and in plain words no opinion was expressed. But there was the look of sorrow in the woman's eye, there was the absence of reference to her husband's assurance that the man was innocent, there was the air of settled grief which told of her own conviction;—and the major left her, convinced that Mrs. Walker believed Mr. Crawley to be guilty.

Then he went to Barchester; not open-mouthed with inquiry, but rather with open ears, and it seemed to him that all men in Barchester were of one mind. There was a county-club in Barchester, and at this county-club nine men out of every ten were talking about Mr. Crawley. It was by no means necessary that a man should ask questions on the subject. Opinion was expressed so freely that no such asking was required; and opinion in Barchester,—at any rate in the county-club, —seemed now to be all of one mind. There had been every disposition at first to believe Mr. Crawley to be innocent. He had been believed to be innocent, even after he had said wrongly that the cheque had been paid to him by Mr. Soames; but he had since stated that he had received it from Dean Arabin, and that statement was also shown to be false. A man who has a cheque changed on his own behalf is bound at least to show where he got the cheque. Mr. Crawley had not only failed to do this, but had given two false excuses. Henry Grantly, as he drove home to Silverbridge on the Sunday afternoon, summed up all the evidence in his own mind, and brought in a verdict of Guilty against the father of the girl whom he loved.

On the following morning he walked into Silverbridge and called at Miss Prettyman's house. As he went along his heart was warmer towards Grace than it had ever been before. He had told himself that he was now bound to abstain, for his father's sake, from doing that which he had told his father that he would certainly do. But he knew also, that he had said that which, though it did not bind him to Miss Crawley, gave her a right to expect that he would so bind himself.

And Miss Prettyman could not but be aware of what his intention had been, and could not but expect that he should now be explicit. Had he been a wise man altogether, he would probably have abstained from saying anything at the present moment,—a wise man, that is, in the ways and feelings of the world in such matters. But, as there are men who will allow themselves all imaginable latitude in their treatment of women, believing that the world will condone any amount of fault of that nature, so are there other men, and a class of men which on the whole is the more numerous of the two, who are tremblingly alive to the danger of censure on this head,—and to the danger of censure not only from others, but from themselves also. Major Grantly had done that which made him think it imperative upon him to do something further, and to do that something at once.

Therefore he started off on the Monday morning after breakfast and walked to Silverbridge, and as he walked he built various castles in the air. Why should he not marry Grace,—if she would have him,—and take her away beyond the reach of her father's calamity? Why should he not throw over his own people altogether, money, position, society, and all, and give himself up to love? Were he to do so, men might say that he was foolish, but no one could hint that he was dishonourable. His spirit was high enough to teach him to think that such conduct on his part would have in it something of magnificence; but, yet, such was not his purpose. In going to Miss Prettyman it was his intention to apologize for not doing this magnificent thing. His mind was quite made up. Nevertheless he built those castles in the air.

It so happened that he encountered the younger Miss Prettyman in the hall. It would not at all have suited him to reveal to her the purport of his visit, or ask her either to assist his suit or to receive his apologies. Miss Anne Prettyman was too common a personage in the Silverbridge world to be fit for such employment. Miss Anne Prettyman was, indeed, herself submissive to him, and treated him with the courtesy which is due to a superior being. He therefore simply asked her whether he could be allowed to see her sister.

"Surely, Major Grantly;—that is, I think so. It is a little early, but I think she can receive you."

"It is early, I know; but as I want to say a word or two on business——"

"Oh, on business. I am sure she will see you on business; she

will only be too proud. If you will be kind enough to step in here for two minutes." Then Miss Anne, having deposited the major in the little parlour, ran upstairs with her message to her sister. "Of course it's about Grace Crawley," she said to herself as she went. "It can't be about anything else. I wonder what it is he's going to say. If he's going to pop, and the father in all this trouble, he's the finest fellow that ever trod." Such were her thoughts as she tapped at the door and announced in the presence of Grace that there was somebody in the hall.

"It's Major Grantly," whispered Anne, as soon as Grace had shut the door behind her.

"So I supposed by your telling her not to go into the hall. What has he come to say?"

"How on earth can I tell you that, Annabella? But I suppose he can have only one thing to say after all that has come and gone. He can only have come with one object."

"He wouldn't have come to me for that. He would have asked to see herself."

"But she never goes out now, and he can't see her."

"Or he would have gone to them over at Hogglestock," said Miss Prettyman. "But of course he must come up now he is here. Would you mind telling him;—or shall I ring the bell?"

"I'll tell him. We need not make more fuss than necessary, with the servants, you know. I suppose I'd better not come back with him?"

There was a tone of supplication in the younger sister's voice as she made the last suggestion, which ought to have melted the heart of the elder; but it was unavailing. "As he has asked to see me, I think you had better not," said Annabella. Miss Anne Prettyman bore her cross meekly, offered no argument on the subject, and returning to the little parlour where she had left the major, brought him upstairs and ushered him into her sister's room without even entering it again, herself.

Major Grantly was as intimately acquainted with Miss Anne Prettyman as a man under thirty may well be with a lady nearer fifty than forty, who is not specially connected with him by any family tie; but of Miss Prettyman he knew personally very much less. Miss Prettyman, as has before been said, did not go out, and was therefore not common to the eyes of the Silverbridgians. She did occasionally see

her friends in her own house, and Grace Crawley's lover, as the major had come to be called, had been there on more than one occasion; but of real personal intimacy between them there had hitherto existed none. He might have spoken, perhaps, a dozen words to her in his life. He had now more than a dozen to speak to her, but he hardly knew how to commence them.

She had got up and curtseyed, and had then taken his hand and asked him to sit down. "My sister tells me that you want to see me," she said, in her softest, mildest voice.

"I do, Miss Prettyman. I want to speak to you about a matter that troubles me very much,—very much indeed."

"Anything that I can do, Major Grantly——"

"Thank you, yes. I know that you are very good, or I should not have ventured to come to you. Indeed I shouldn't trouble you now, of course, if it was only about myself. I know very well what a great friend you are to Miss Crawley."

"Yes, I am. We love Grace dearly here."

"So do I," said the major, bluntly; "I love her dearly, too." Then he paused, as though he thought that Miss Prettyman ought to take up the speech. But Miss Prettyman seemed to think differently, and he was obliged to go on. "I don't know whether you have ever heard about it, or noticed it, or—or—or——" He felt that he was very awkward, and he blushed. Major as he was, he blushed as he sat before the old woman, trying to tell his story, but not knowing how to tell it. "The truth is, Miss Prettyman, I have done all but ask her to be my wife, and now has come this terrible affair about her father."

"It is a terrible affair Major Grantly;—very terrible."

"By Jove, you may say that!"

'Of course Mr. Crawley is as innocent in the matter as you or I are."

"You think so, Miss Prettyman?"

"Think so! I feel quite sure of it. What; a clergyman of the Church of England, a pious, hard-working country clergyman, whom we have known among us by his good works for years, suddenly turn thief, and pilfer a few pounds! It is not possible, Major Grantly. And the father of such a daughter, too! It is not possible. It may do for men of business to think so, lawyers and such like, who are obliged to think in accordance with the evidence, as they call it; but to my

mind the idea is monstrous. I don't know how he got it, and I don't care; but I'm quite sure he did not steal it. Who ever heard of anybody becoming so base as that all at once?"

The major was startled by her eloquence, and by the indignant tone of voice in which it was expressed. It seemed to tell him that she would give him no sympathy in that which he had come to say to her, and that she was prepared to upbraid him already in that he was not prepared to do the magnificent thing of which he had thought when he had been building his castles in the air. Why should he not do the magnificent thing? Miss Prettyman's eloquence was so strong that it half convinced him that the Barchester Club and Mr. Walker had come to a wrong conclusion after all.

"And how does Miss Crawley bear it?" he asked, desirous of postponing for a while any declaration of his own purpose.

"She is very unhappy, of course. Not that she thinks evil of her father."

"Of course she does not think him guilty?"

"Nobody thinks him so in this house, Major Grantly," said the little woman, very imperiously. "But Grace is, naturally enough, very sad;—very sad indeed. I do not think I can ask you to see her to-day."

"I was not thinking of it," said the major.

"Poor, dear girl! it is a great trial for her. Do you wish me to give her any message, Major Grantly?"

The moment had now come in which he must say that which he had come to say. The little woman waited for an answer, and as he was there, within her power as it were, he must speak. I fear that what he said will not be approved by any strong-minded reader. I fear that our lover will henceforth be considered by such a one as being but a weak, wishy-washy man, who had hardly any mind of his own to speak of;—that he was a man of no account, as the poor people say. "Miss Prettyman, what message ought I to send to her?" he said.

"Nay, Major Grantly, how can I tell you that? How can I put words into your mouth?"

"It isn't the words," he said; "but the feelings?"

"And how can I tell the feelings of your heart?"

"Oh, as for that, I know what my feelings are. I do love her with

all my heart;—I do, indeed. A fortnight ago I was only thinking whether she would accept me when I asked her,—wondering whether I was too old for her, and whether she would mind having Edith to take care of."

"She is very fond of Edith,—very fond indeed."

"Is she?" said the major, more distracted than ever. Why should he not do the magnificent thing after all? "But it is a great charge for a young girl when she marries."

"It is a great charge;—a very great charge. It is for you to think whether you should entrust so great a charge to one so young."

"I have no fear about that at all."

"Nor should I have any,—as you ask me. We have known Grace well, thoroughly, and are quite sure that she will do her duty in that state of life to which it may please God to call her."

The major was aware when this was said to him that he had not come to Miss Prettyman for a character of the girl he loved; and yet he was not angry at receiving it. He was neither angry, nor even indifferent. He accepted the character almost gratefully, though he felt that he was being led away from his purpose. He consoled himself for this, however, by remembering that the path by which Miss Prettyman was now leading him, led to the magnificent, and to those pleasant castles in the air which he had been building as he walked into Silverbridge. "I am quite sure that she is all that you say," he replied. "Indeed I had made up my mind about that long ago."

"And what can I do for you, Major Grantly?"

"You think I ought not to see her?"

"I will ask herself, if you please. I have such trust in her judgment that I should leave her altogether to her own discretion."

The magnificent thing must be done, and the major made up his mind accordingly. Something of regret came over his spirit as he thought of a father-in-law disgraced and degraded, and of his own father broken-hearted. But now there was hardly an alternative left to him. And was it not the manly thing for him to do? He had loved the girl before this trouble had come upon her, and was he not bound to accept the burden which his love had brought with it? "I will see her," he said, "at once, if you will let me, and ask her to be my wife. But I must see her alone."

Then Miss Prettyman paused. Hitherto she had undoubtedly been playing her fish cautiously, or rather her young friend's fish,—perhaps I may say cunningly. She had descended to artifice on behalf of the girl whom she loved, admired, and pitied. She had seen some way into the man's mind, and had been partly aware of his purpose,—of his infirmity of purpose, of his double purpose. She had perceived that a word from her might help Grace's chance, and had led the man on till he had committed himself, at any rate to her. In doing this she had been actuated by friendship rather than by abstract principle. But now, when the moment had come in which she must decide upon some action, she paused. Was it right, for the sake of either of them, that an offer of marriage should be made at such a moment as this? It might be very well, in regard to some future time, that the major should have so committed himself. She saw something of the man's spirit, and believed that, having gone so far, having so far told his love, he would return to his love hereafter, let the result of the Crawley trial be what it might. But,—but, this could be no proper time for love-making. Though Grace loved the man, as Miss Prettyman knew well,—though Grace loved the child, having allowed herself to long to call it her own,—though such a marriage would be the making of Grace's fortune as those who loved her could hardly have hoped that it should ever have been made, she would certainly refuse the man, if he were to propose to her now. She would refuse him, and then the man would be free;—free to change his mind if he thought fit. Considering all these things, craftily in the exercise of her friendship, too cunningly, I fear, to satisfy the claims of a high morality, she resolved that the major had better not see Miss Crawley at the present moment. Miss Prettyman paused before she replied, and, when she did speak, Major Grantly had risen from his chair and was standing with his back to the fire. "Major Grantly," she said, "you shall see her if you please, and if she pleases; but I doubt whether her answer at such a moment as this would be that which you would wish to receive."

"You think she would refuse me."

"I do not think that she would accept you now. She would feel,—I am sure she would feel, that these hours of her father's sorrow are not hours in which love should be either offered or accepted. You shall, however, see her if you please."

The major allowed himself a moment for thought; and as he thought he sighed. Grace Crawley became more beautiful in his eyes than ever, was endowed by these words from Miss Prettyman with new charms and brighter virtues than he had seen before. Let come what might he would ask her to be his wife on some future day, if he did not so ask her now. For the present, perhaps, he had better be guided by Miss Prettyman. "Then I will not see her," he said.

"I think that will be the wiser course."

"Of course you knew before this that I—loved her?"

"I thought so, Major Grantly."

"And that I intended to ask her to be my wife?"

"Well; since you put the question to me so plainly, I must confess that as Grace's friend I should not quite have let things go on as they have gone,—though I am not at all disposed to interfere with any girl whom I believe to be pure and good as I know her to be,—but still I should hardly have been justified in letting things go as they have gone, if I had not believed that such was your purpose."

"I wanted to set myself right with you, Miss Prettyman."

"You are right with me—quite right;" and she got up and gave him her hand. "You are a fine, noble-hearted gentleman, and I hope that our Grace may live to be your happy wife, and the mother of your darling child, and the mother of other children. I do not see how a woman could have a happier lot in life."

"And will you give Grace my love?"

"I will tell her at any rate that you have been here, and that you have inquired after her with the greatest kindness. She will understand what that means without any word of love."

"Can I do anything for her,—or for her father; I mean in the way of—money? I don't mind mentioning it to you, Miss Prettyman."

"I will tell her that you are to do it, if anything can be done. For myself I feel no doubt that the mystery will be cleared up at last; and then, if you will come here, we shall be so glad to see you;—I shall, at least."

Then the major went, and Miss Prettyman herself actually descended with him into the hall, and bade him farewell most affectionately before her sister and two of the maids who came out to open the door. Miss Anne Prettyman, when she saw the great friendship with which the major was dismissed, could not contain herself, but asked most

impudent questions, in a whisper indeed, but in such a whisper that any sharp-eared maid-servant could hear and understand them. "Is it settled," she asked when her sister had ascended only the first flight of stairs;—"has he popped?" The look with which the elder sister punished and dismayed the younger, I would not have borne for twenty pounds. She simply looked, and said nothing, but passed on. When she had regained her room she rang the bell, and desired the servant to ask Miss Crawley to be good enough to step to her. Poor Miss Anne retired discomfited into the solitude of one of the lower rooms, and sat for some minutes all alone, recovering from the shock of her sister's anger. "At any rate, he hasn't popped," she said to herself, as she made her way back to the school.

After that Miss Prettyman and Miss Crawley were closeted together for about an hour. What passed between them need not be repeated here word for word; but it may be understood that Miss Prettyman said no more than she ought to have said, and that Grace understood all that she ought to have understood. "No man ever behaved with more considerate friendship, or more like a gentleman," said Miss Prettyman.

"I am sure he is very good, and I am so glad he did not ask to see me," said Grace. Then Grace went away, and Miss Prettyman sat awhile in thought, considering what she had done, not without some stings of conscience.

Major Grantly, as he walked home, was not altogether satisfied with himself, though he gave himself credit for some diplomacy which I do not think he deserved. He felt that Miss Prettyman and the world in general, should the world in general ever hear anything about it, would give him credit for having behaved well; and that he had obtained this credit without committing himself to the necessity of marrying the daughter of a thief, should things turn out badly in regard to the father. But,—and this but robbed him of all the pleasure which comes from real success,—but he had not treated Grace Crawley with the perfect generosity which love owes, and he was in some degree ashamed of himself. He felt, however, that he might probably have Grace, should he choose to ask for her when this trouble should have passed by. "And I will," he said to himself, as he entered the gate of his own paddock, and saw his child in her perambulator before the nurse. "And I will ask her, sooner or later, let things go as they

may." Then he took the perambulator under his own charge for half-an-hour, to the satisfaction of the nurse, of the child, and of himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. CRAWLEY IS TAKEN TO SILVERBRIDGE.

It had become necessary on the Monday morning that Mrs. Crawley should obtain from her husband an undertaking that he would present himself before the magistrates at Silverbridge on the Thursday. She had been made to understand that the magistrates were sinning against the strict rule of the law in not issuing a warrant at once for Mr. Crawley's apprehension; and that they were so sinning at the instance of Mr. Walker,—at whose instance they would have committed almost any sin practicable by a board of English magistrates, so great was their faith in him; and she knew that she was bound to answer her engagement. She had also another task to perform—that, namely, of persuading him to employ an attorney for his defence; and she was prepared with the name of an attorney, one Mr. Mason, also of Silverbridge, who had been recommended to her by Mr. Walker. But when she came to the performance of these two tasks on the Monday morning, she found that she was unable to accomplish either of them. Mr. Crawley first declared that he would have nothing to do with any attorney. As to that he seemed to have made up his mind beforehand, and she saw at once that she had no hope of shaking him. But when she found that he was equally obstinate in the other matter, and that he declared that he would not go before the magistrates unless he were made to do so,—unless the policemen came and fetched him, then she almost sank beneath the burden of her troubles, and for a while was disposed to let things go as they would.

On the Sunday the poor man had exerted himself to get through

his Sunday duties, and he had succeeded. He had succeeded so well that his wife had thought that things might yet come right with him, that he would remember, before it was too late, the true history of that unhappy bit of paper, and that he was rising above that half madness which for months past had afflicted him. On the Sunday evening, when he was tired with his work, she thought it best to say nothing to him about the magistrates and the business of Thursday. But on the Monday morning she commenced her task, feeling that she owed it to Mr. Walker to lose no more time. He was very decided in his manners, and made her understand that he would employ no lawyer on his own behalf. "Why should I want a lawyer? I have done nothing wrong," he said. Then she tried to make him understand that many who may have done nothing wrong require a lawyer's aid. "And who is to pay him?" he asked. To this she replied, unfortunately, that there would be no need of thinking of that at once. "And I am to get further into debt!" he said. "I am to put myself right before the world by incurring debts which I know I can never pay? When it has been a question of food for the children I have been weak, but I will not be weak in such a matter as this. I will have no lawyer." She did not regard this denial on his part as very material, though she would fain have followed Mr. Walker's advice had she been able; but when, later in the day, he declared that the police should fetch him, then her spirit gave way. Early in the morning he seemed to assent to the expediency of going into Silverbridge on the Thursday, and it was not till after he had worked himself into a rage about the proposed attorney that he utterly refused to make the journey. During the whole day, however, his state was such as almost to break his wife's heart. He would do nothing. He would not go to the school, nor even stir beyond the house-door. He would not open a book. He would not eat, nor would he even sit at table or say the accustomed grace when the scanty mid-day meal was placed upon the table. "Nothing is blessed to me," he said, when his wife pressed him to say the words for their child's sake. "Shall I say that I thank God when my heart is thankless? Shall I serve my child by a lie?" Then for hours he sat in the same position, in the old arm-chair, hanging over the fire speechless, sleepless, thinking ever, as she well knew, of the injustice of the world. She hardly dared to speak to him, so great was the bitterness of his words when he was goaded to reply. At

last, late in the evening, feeling that it would be her duty to send in to Mr. Walker early on the following morning, she laid her hand gently on his shoulder and asked him for his promise. "I may tell Mr. Walker that you will be there on Thursday?"

"No," he said, shouting at her. "No. I will have no such message sent." She started back, trembling. Not that she was accustomed to tremble at his ways, or to show that she feared him in his paroxysms, but that his voice had been louder than she had before known it. "I will hold no intercourse with them at Silverbridge in this matter. Do you hear me, Mary?"

"I hear you, Josiah; but I must keep my word to Mr. Walker. I promised that I would send to him."

"Tell him, then, that I will not stir a foot out of this house on Thursday, of my own accord. On Thursday I shall be here; and here I will remain all day,—unless they take me hence by force."

"But, Josiah——"

"Will you obey me, or shall I walk into Silverbridge myself and tell the man that I will not come to him?" Then he arose from his chair and stretched forth his hand to his hat as though he was going forth immediately, on his way to Silverbridge. The night was now pitch dark, and the rain was falling, and abroad he would encounter all the severity of the pitiless winter. Still it might have been better that he should have gone. The exercise and the fresh air, even the wet and the mud, would have served to bring back his mind to reason. But his wife thought of the misery of the journey, of his scanty clothing, of his worn boots, of the need there was to preserve the raiment which he wore; and she remembered that he was fasting,—that he had eaten nothing since the morning, and that he was not fit to be alone. She stopped him, therefore, before he could reach the door.

"Your bidding shall be done," she said,—"of course."

"Tell them, then, that they must seek me here if they want me."

"But, Josiah, think of the parish,—of the people who respect you. For their sakes let it not be said that you were taken away by policemen."

"Was St. Paul not bound in prison? Did he think of what the people might see?"

"If it were necessary, I would encourage you to bear it without a murmur."

"It is necessary, whether you murmur, or do not murmur. Murmur, indeed! Why does not your voice ascend to heaven with one loud wail against the cruelty of man?" Then he went forth from the room into an empty chamber on the other side of the passage; and his wife, when she followed him there after a few minutes, found him on his knees, with his forehead against the floor, and with his hands clutching at the scanty hairs of his head. Often before had she seen him so, on the same spot, half grovelling, half prostrate in prayer, reviling in his agony all things around him,—nay, nearly all things above him,—and yet striving to reconcile himself to his Creator by the humiliation of confession.

It might be better with him now if only he could bring himself to some softness of heart. Softly she closed the door, and placing the candle on the mantel-shelf, softly she knelt beside him, and softly touched his hands with hers. He did not stir nor utter a word, but seemed to clutch at his thin locks more violently than before. Then she kneeling there, aloud, but with low voice, with her thin hands clasped, uttered a prayer in which she asked her God to remove from her husband the bitterness of that hour. He listened till she had finished, and then he rose slowly to his feet. "It is in vain," said he. "It is all in vain. It is all in vain." Then he returned back to the parlour, and seating himself again in the arm-chair, remained there without speaking till past midnight. At last, when she told him that she herself was very cold, and reminded him that for the last hour there had been no fire, still speechless, he went up with her to their bed.

Early on the following morning she contrived to let him know that she was about to send a neighbour's son over with a note to Mr. Walker, fearing to urge him further to change his mind; but hoping that he might express his purpose of doing so when he heard that the letter was to be sent; but he took no notice whatever of her words. At this moment he was reading Greek with his daughter, or rather rebuking her because she could not be induced to read Greek.

"Oh, papa," the poor girl said, "don't scold me now. I am so unhappy because of all this."

"And am not I unhappy?" he said, as he closed the book. "My God, what have I done against thee, that my lines should be cast in such terrible places?"

The letter was sent to Mr. Walker. "He knows himself to be innocent," said the poor wife, writing what best excuse she knew how to make, "and thinks that he should take no step himself in such a matter. He will not employ a lawyer, and he says that he should prefer that he should be sent for, if the law requires his presence at Silverbridge on Thursday." All this she wrote, as though she felt that she ought to employ a high tone in defending her husband's purpose; but she broke down altogether in the few words of the postscript. "Indeed, indeed I have done what I could!" Mr. Walker understood it all, both the high tone and the subsequent fall.

On the Thursday morning, at about ten o'clock, a fly stopped at the gate of the Hogglestock Parsonage, and out of it there came two men. One was dressed in ordinary black clothes, and seemed from his bearing to be a respectable man of the middle class of life. He was, however, the superintendent of police for the Silverbridge district. The other man was a policeman, pure and simple, with the helmet-looking hat and all the ordinary half-military and wholly disagreeable outward adjuncts of the profession. "Wilkins," said the superintendent, "likely enough I shall want you, for they tell me the gent is uncommon strange. But if I don't call you when I come out, just open the door like a servant, and mount up on the box when we're in. And don't speak nor say nothing." Then the senior policeman entered the house.

He found Mrs. Crawley sitting in the parlour with her bonnet and shawl on, and Mr. Crawley in the arm-chair, leaning over the fire. "I suppose we had better go with you," said Mrs. Crawley directly the door was opened; for of course she had seen the arrival of the fly from the window.

"The gentleman had better come with us if he'll be so kind," said Thompson. "I've brought a close carriage for him."

"But I may go with him?" said the wife, with frightened voice. 'I may accompany my husband. He is not well, sir, and wants assistance."

Thompson thought about it for a moment before he spoke. There was room in the fly for only two, or if for three, still he knew his place better than to thrust himself inside together with his prisoner and his prisoner's wife. He had been specially asked by Mr. Walker to be very civil. Only one could sit on the box with the driver, and if the

request was conceded the poor policeman must walk back. The walk, however, would not kill the policeman. "All right, ma'am," said Thompson;—"that is, if the gentleman will just pass his word not to get out till I ask him."

"He will not! He will not!" said Mrs. Crawley.

"I will pass my word for nothing," said Mr. Crawley.

Upon hearing this, Thompson assumed a very long face, and shook his head as he turned his eyes first towards the husband and then towards the wife, and shrugged his shoulders, and compressing his lips, blew out his breath, as though in this way he might blow off some of the mingled sorrow and indignation with which the gentleman's words afflicted him.

Mrs. Crawley rose and came close to him. "You may take my word for it, he will not stir. You may indeed. He thinks it incumbent on him not to give any undertaking himself, because he feels himself to be so harshly used."

"I don't know about harshness," said Thompson, brindling up. "A close carriage brought and——"

"I will walk. If I am made to go, I will walk," shouted Mr. Crawley.

"I did not allude to you,—or to Mr. Walker," said the poor wife. "I know you have been most kind. I meant the harshness of the circumstances. Of course he is innocent, and you must feel for him."

"Yes, I feel for him, and for you too, ma'am."

"That is all I meant. He knows his own innocence, and therefore he is unwilling to give way in anything."

"Of course he knows hisself, that's certain. But he'd better come in the carriage if only because of the dirt and slush."

"He will go in the carriage; and I will go with him. There will be room there for you, sir."

Thompson looked up at the rain, and told himself that it was very cold. Then he remembered Mr. Walker's injunction, and bethought himself that Mrs. Crawley, in spite of her poverty, was a lady. He conceived even unconsciously the idea that something was due to her because of her poverty. "I'll go with the driver," said he, "but he'll only give hisself a deal of trouble if he attempts to get out."

"He won't; he won't," said Mrs. Crawley. "And I thank you with all my heart."

"Come along, then," said Thompson.

She went up to her husband, hat in hand, and looking round to see that she was not watched, put the hat on his head, and then lifted him as it were from his chair. He did not refuse to be led, and allowing her to throw round his shoulders the old cloak which was hanging in the passage he passed out, and was the first to seat himself in the Silverbridge fly. His wife followed him, and did not hear the blandishments with which Thompson instructed his myrmidon to follow through the mud on foot. Slowly they made their way through the lanes, and it was nearly twelve when the fly was driven into the yard of the "George and Vulture" at Silverbridge.

Silverbridge, though it was blessed with a mayor and corporation, and was blessed also with a Member of Parliament all to itself, was not blessed with any court-house. The magistrates were therefore compelled to sit in the big room at the "George and Vulture," in which the county balls were celebrated, and the meeting of the West Barsetshire freemasons was held. That part of the country was, no doubt, very much ashamed of its backwardness in this respect, but as yet nothing had been done to remedy the evil. Thompson and his fly were therefore driven into the yard of the Inn, and Mr. and Mrs. Crawley were ushered by him up into a little bed-chamber close adjoining to the big room in which the magistrates were already assembled. "There's a bit of fire here," said Thompson, "and you can make yourselves a little warm." He himself was shivering with the cold. "When the gents is ready in there, I'll just come and fetch you."

"I may go in with him?" said Mrs. Crawley.

"I'll have a chair for you at the end of the table, just nigh to him," said Thompson. "You can slip into it and say nothing to nobody." Then he left them and went away to the magistrates.

Mr. Crawley had not spoken a word since he had entered the vehicle. Nor had she said much to him, but had sat with him holding his hand in hers. Now he spoke to her,—"Where is it that we are?" he asked.

"At Silverbridge dearest."

"But what is this chamber? And why are we here?"

"We are to wait here till the magistrates are ready. They are in the next room."

"But this is the Inn?"

"Yes, dear, it is the Inn."

"And I see crowds of people about." There were crowds of people about. There had been men in the yard, and others standing about on the stairs, and the public room was full of men who were curious to see the clergyman who had stolen twenty pounds, and to hear what would be the result of the case before the magistrates. He must be committed; so, at least, said everybody; but then there would be the question of bail. Would the magistrates let him out on bail, and who would be the bailsmen? "Why are the people here?" said Mr. Crawley.

"I suppose it is the custom when the magistrates are sitting," said his wife.

"They have come to see the degradation of a clergyman," said he; —"and they will not be disappointed."

"Nothing can degrade but guilt," said his wife.

"Yes,—misfortune can degrade, and poverty. A man is degraded when the cares of the world press so heavily upon him that he cannot rouse himself. They have come to look at me as though I were a hunted beast."

"It is but their custom always on such days."

"They have not always a clergyman before them as a criminal." Then he was silent for a while, while she was chafing his cold hands. "Would that I were dead, before they had brought me to this! Would that I were dead!"

"Is it not right, dear, that we should all bear what He sends us?"

"Would that I were dead!" he repeated. "The load is too heavy for me to bear, and I would that I were dead!"

The time seemed to be very long before Thompson returned and asked them to accompany him into the big room. When he did so, Mr. Crawley grasped hold of his chair as though he had resolved that he would not go. But his wife whispered a word to him, and he obeyed her. "He will follow me," she said to the policeman. And in that way they went from the small room into the large one. Thompson went first; Mrs. Crawley with her veil down came next; and the wretched man followed his wife, with his eyes fixed upon the ground and his hands clasped together upon his breast. He could at first

have seen nothing, and could hardly have known where he was when they placed him in a chair. She, with a better courage, contrived to look round through her veil, and saw that there was a long board or table covered with green cloth, and that six or seven gentlemen were sitting at one end of it, while there seemed to be a crowd standing along the sides and about the room. Her husband was seated at the other end of the table, near the corner, and round the corner,—so that she might be close to him,—her chair had been placed. On the other side of him there was another chair, now empty, intended for any professional gentleman whom he might choose to employ.

There were five magistrates sitting there. Lord Lufton, from Framley, was in the chair;—a handsome man, still young, who was very popular in the county. The cheque which had been cashed had borne his signature, and he had consequently expressed his intention of not sitting at the board; but Mr. Walker, desirous of having him there, had overruled him, showing him that the loss was not his loss. The cheque, if stolen, had not been stolen from him. He was not the prosecutor. "No, by Jove," said Lord Lufton; "if I could quash the whole thing, I'd do it at once!"

"You can't do that, my lord, but you may help us at the board," said Mr. Walker.

Then there was the Hon. George De Courcy, Lord De Courcy's brother, from Castle Courcy. Lord De Courcy did not live in the county, but his brother did so, and endeavoured to maintain the glory of the family by the discretion of his conduct. He was not, perhaps, among the wisest of men, but he did very well as a country magistrate, holding his tongue, keeping his eyes open, and, on such occasions as this, obeying Mr. Walker in all things. Dr. Tempest was also there, the rector of the parish, he being both magistrate and clergyman. There were many in Silverbridge who declared that Dr. Tempest would have done far better to stay away when a brother clergyman was thus to be brought before the bench; but it had been long since Dr. Tempest had cared what was said about him in Silverbridge. He had become so accustomed to the life he led as to like to be disliked, and to be enamoured of unpopularity. So when Mr. Walker had ventured to suggest to him that, perhaps, he might not choose to be there, he had laughed Mr. Walker to scorn. "Of course I shall be there," he said,

"I am interested in the case,—very much interested. Of course I shall be there." And had not Lord Lufton been present he would have made himself more conspicuous by taking the chair. Mr. Fothergill was the fourth. Mr. Fothergill was man of business to the Duke of Omnium, who was the great owner of property in and about Silverbridge, and he was the most active magistrate in that part of the county. He was a sharp man, and not at all likely to have any predisposition in favour of a clergyman. The fifth was Dr. Thorne, of Chaldicotes, a gentleman whose name has been already mentioned in these pages. He had been for many years a medical man practising in a little village in the further end of the county; but it had come to be his fate, late in life, to marry a great heiress, with whose money the ancient house and domain of Chaldicotes had been purchased from the Sowerbys. Since then Dr. Thorne had done his duty well as a country gentleman,—not, however, without some little want of smoothness between him and the duke's people.

Chaldicotes lay next to the duke's territory, and the duke had wished to buy Chaldicotes. When Chaldicotes slipped through the duke's fingers and went into the hands of Dr. Thorne,—or of Dr. Thorne's wife,—the duke had been very angry with Mr. Fothergill. Hence it had come to pass that there had not always been smoothness between the duke's people and the Chaldicotes people. It was now rumoured that Dr. Thorne intended to stand for the county on the next vacancy, and that did not tend to make things smoother. On the right hand of Lord Lufton sat Lord George and Mr. Fothergill, and beyond Mr. Fothergill sat Mr. Walker, and beyond Mr. Walker sat Mr. Walker's clerk. On the left hand of the chairman were Dr. Tempest and Dr. Thorne, and a little lower down was Mr. Zachary Winthrop, who held the situation of clerk to the magistrates. Many people in Silverbridge said that this was all wrong, as Mr. Winthrop was partner with Mr. Walker, who was always employed before the magistrates if there was any employment going for an attorney. For this, however, Mr. Walker cared very little. He had so much of his own way in Silverbridge, that he was supposed to care nothing for anybody.

There were many other gentlemen in the room, and some who knew Mr. Crawley with more or less intimacy. He, however, took notice of

no one, and when one friend, who had really known him well, came up behind and spoke to him gently leaning over his chair, the poor man hardly recognized his friend.

"I'm sure your husband won't forget me," said Mr. Robarts, the clergyman of Framley, as he gave his hand to that lady across the back of Mr. Crawley's chair.

"No, Mr. Robarts, he does not forget you. But you must excuse him if at this moment he is not quite himself. It is a trying situation for a clergyman."

"I can understand all that; but I'll tell you why I have come. I suppose this inquiry will finish the whole affair and clear up whatever may be the difficulty. But should it not do so, it may be just possible, Mrs. Crawley, that something may be said about bail. I don't understand much about it, and I daresay you do not either; but if there should be anything of that sort, let Mr. Crawley name me. A brother clergyman will be best, and I'll have some other gentleman with me." Then he left her, not waiting for any answer.

At the same time there was a conversation going on between Mr. Walker and another attorney standing behind him, Mr. Mason. "I'll go to him," said Walker, "and try to arrange it." So Mr. Walker seated himself in the empty chair beside Mr. Crawley, and endeavoured to explain to the wretched man, that he would do well to allow Mr. Mason to assist him. Mr. Crawley seemed to listen to all that was said, and then turned upon the speaker sharply: "I will have no one to assist me," he said so loudly that every one in the room heard the words. "I am innocent. Why should I want assistance? Nor have I money to pay for it." Mr. Mason made a quick movement forward, intending to explain that that consideration need offer no impediment, but was stopped by further speech from Mr. Crawley. "I will have no one to help me," said he, standing upright, and for the first time removing his hat from his head. "Go on, and do what it is you have to do." After that he did not sit down till the proceedings were nearly over, though he was invited more than once by Lord Lufton to do so.

We need not go through all the evidence that was brought to bear upon the question. It was proved that money for the cheque was paid to Mr. Crawley's messenger, and that this money was given to Mr. Crawley. When there occurred some little delay in the chain of

evidence necessary to show that Mr. Crawley had signed and sent the cheque and got the money, he became impatient. "Why do you trouble the man?" he said. "I had the cheque, and I sent him. I got the money. Has any one denied it, that you should strive to drive a poor man like that beyond his wits?" Then Mr. Soames and the manager of the bank showed what inquiry had been made as soon as the cheque came back from the London bank; how at first they had both thought that Mr. Crawley could of course explain the matter, and how he had explained it by a statement which was manifestly untrue. Then there was evidence to prove that the cheque could not have been paid to him by Mr. Soames, and as this was given, Mr. Crawley shook his head and again became impatient. "I erred in that," he exclaimed. "Of course I erred. In my haste I thought it was so, and in my haste I said so. I am not good at reckoning money and remembering sums. But I saw that I had been wrong when my error was shown to me, and I acknowledged at once that I had been wrong."

Up to this point he had behaved not only with so much spirit, but with so much reason, that his wife began to hope that the importance of the occasion had brought back the clearness of his mind, and that he would, even now, be able to place himself right as the inquiry went on. Then it was explained that Mr. Crawley had stated that the cheque had been given to him by Dean Arabin, as soon as it was shown that it could not have been given to him by Mr. Soames. In reference to this, Mr. Walker was obliged to explain that application had been made to the dean, who was abroad, and that the dean had stated that he had given fifty pounds to his friend. Mr. Walker explained also that the very notes of which this fifty pounds had consisted had been traced back to Mr. Crawley, and that they had had no connection with the cheque or with the money which had been given for the cheque at the bank.

Mr. Soames stated that he had lost the cheque with a pocket-book; that he had certainly lost it on the day on which he had called on Mr. Crawley at Hogglestock; and that he missed his pocket-book on his journey back from Hogglestock to Barchester. At the moment of missing it he remembered that he had taken the book out from his pocket in Mr. Crawley's room, and at that moment he had not doubted but that he had left it in Mr. Crawley's house. He had written and sent to Mr. Crawley to inquire, but had been assured that nothing had

been found. There had been no other property of value in the pocket book,—nothing but a few visiting cards and a memorandum, and he had therefore stopped the cheque at the London bank, and thought no more about it.

Mr. Crawley was then asked to explain in what way he came possessed of the cheque. The question was first put by Lord Lufton; but it soon fell into Mr. Walker's hands, who certainly asked it with all the kindness with which such an inquiry could be made. Could Mr. Crawley at all remember by what means that bit of paper had come into his possession, or how long he had had it? He answered the last question first. "It had been with him for months." And why had he kept it? He looked round the room sternly, almost savagely, before he answered, fixing his eyes for a moment upon almost every face around him as he did so. Then he spoke. "I was driven by shame to keep it;—and then by shame to use it." That this statement was true, no one in the room doubted.

And then the other question was pressed upon him; and he lifted up his hands, and raised his voice, and swore by the Saviour in whom he trusted, that he knew not from whence the money had come to him. Why then had he said that it had come from the dean? He had thought so. The dean had given him money, covered up, in an enclosure, "so that the touch of the coin might not add to my disgrace in taking his alms," said the wretched man, thus speaking openly and freely in his agony of the shame which he had striven so persistently to hide. He had not seen the dean's moneys as they had been given, and he had thought that the cheque had been with them. Beyond that he could tell them nothing.

Then there was a conference between the magistrates and Mr. Walker, in which Mr. Walker submitted that the magistrates had no alternative but to commit the gentleman. To this Lord Lufton demurred, and with him Dr. Thorne.

"I believe, as I am sitting here," said Lord Lufton, "that he has told the truth, and that he does not know any more than I do from whence the cheque came."

"I am quite sure he does not," said Dr. Thorne.

Lord George remarked that it was the "queerest go he had ever come across." Dr. Tempest merely shook his head. Mr. Fothergill pointed out that even supposing the gentleman's statement to be true,

it by no means went towards establishing the gentleman's innocence. The cheque had been traced to the gentleman's hands, and the gentleman was bound to show how it had come into his possession. Even supposing that the gentleman had found the cheque in his house, which was likely enough, he was not thereby justified in changing it, and applying the proceeds to his own purposes. Mr. Walker told them that Mr. Fothergill was right, and that the only excuse to be made for Mr. Crawley was that he was out of his senses.

"I don't see it," said Lord Lufton. "I might have a lot of paper money by me, and not know from Adam where I got it."

"But you would have to show where you got it, my lord, when inquiry was made," said Mr. Fothergill.

Lord Lufton, who was not particularly fond of Mr. Fothergill, and was very unwilling to be instructed by him in any of the duties of a magistrate, turned his back at once upon the duke's agent; but within three minutes afterwards he had submitted to the same instructions from Mr. Walker.

Mr. Crawley had again seated himself, and during this period of the affair was leaning over the table with his face buried on his arms. Mrs. Crawley sat by his side, utterly impotent as to any assistance, just touching him with her hand, and waiting behind her veil till she should be made to understand what was the decision of the magistrates. This was at last communicated to her,—and to him,—in a whisper by Mr. Walker. Mr. Crawley must understand that he was committed to take his trial at Barchester, at the next assizes, which would be held in April, but that bail would be taken;—his own bail in five hundred pounds, and that of two others in two hundred and fifty pounds each. And Mr. Walker explained further that he and the bailmen were ready, and that the bail-bond was prepared. The bailmen were to be the Rev. Mr. Robarts, and Major Grantly. In five minutes the bond was signed and Mr. Crawley was at liberty to go away, a free man,—till the Barchester Assizes should come round in April.

Of all that was going on at this time Mr. Crawley knew little or nothing, and Mrs. Crawley did not know much. She did say a word of thanks to Mr. Robarts, and begged that the same might be said to—the other gentleman. If she had heard the major's name she did not remember it. Then they were led out back into the bed-room, where Mrs. Walker was found, anxious to do something, if she only knew

what, to comfort the wretched husband and the wretched wife. But what comfort or consolation could there be within their reach? There was tea made ready for them, and sandwiches cut from the Inn larder. And there was sherry in the Inn decanter. But no such comfort as that was possible for either of them.

They were taken home again in the fly, returning without the escort of Mr. Thompson, and as they went some few words were spoken by Mrs. Crawley. "Josiah," she said, "there will be a way out of this, even yet, if you will only hold up your head and trust."

"There is a way out of it," he said. "There is a way. There is but one way." When he had so spoken she said no more, but resolved that her eye should never be off him, no,—not for a moment. Then, when she had gotten him once more into that front parlour, she threw her arms round him and kissed him.

CHAPTER IX.

GRACE CRAWLEY GOES TO ALLINGTON.

THE tidings of what had been done by the magistrates at their petty sessions was communicated the same night to Grace Crawley by Miss Prettyman. Miss Anne Prettyman had heard the news within five minutes of the execution of the bail-bond, and had rushed to her sister with information as to the event. "They have found him guilty; they have, indeed. They have convicted him,—or whatever it is, because he couldn't say where he got it." "You do not mean that they have sent him to prison?" "No;—not to prison; not as yet, that is. I don't understand it altogether; but he's to be tried at the assizes. In the mean time he's to be out on bail. Major Grantly is to be the bail,—he and Mr. Robarts. That, I think, was very nice of him." It was undoubtedly the fact that Miss Anne Prettyman had received an

accession of pleasurable emotion when she learned that Mr. Crawley had not been sent away scathless, but had been condemned, as it were, to a public trial at the assizes. And yet she would have done anything in her power to save Grace Crawley, or even to save her father. And it must be explained that Miss Anne Prettyman was supposed to be specially efficient in teaching Roman history to her pupils, although she was so manifestly ignorant of the course of law in the country in which she lived. "Committed him," said Miss Prettyman, correcting her sister with scorn. "They have not convicted him. Had they convicted him, there could be no question of bail." "I don't know how all that is, Annabella, but at any rate Major Grantly is to be the bails-man, and there is to be another trial at Barchester." "There cannot be more than one trial in a criminal case," said Miss Prettyman, "unless the jury should disagree, or something of that kind. I suppose he has been committed, and that the trial will take place at the assizes." "Exactly ;—that's just it." Had Lord Lufton appeared as prætor, and had Thompson walked before him as lictor, carrying the fasces, Miss Anne would have known more about it.

The sad tidings were not told to Grace till the evening. Mrs. Crawley, when the inquiry was over before the magistrates, would fain have had herself driven to the Miss Prettyman's school that she might see her daughter; but she felt that to be impossible while her husband was in her charge. The father would of course have gone to his child, had the visit been suggested to him; but that would have caused another terrible scene; and the mother, considering it all in her mind, thought it better to abstain. Miss Prettyman did her best to make poor Grace think that the affair had gone so far favourably,—did her best, that is, without saying anything which her conscience told her to be false. "It is to be settled at the assizes in April," she said.

"And in the mean time what will become of papa?"

"Your papa will be at home, just as usual. He must have some one to advise him. I dare say it would have been all over now if he would have employed an attorney."

"But it seems so hard that an attorney should be wanted."

"My dear Grace, things in this world are hard."

"But they are always harder for papa and mamma than for anybody else." In answer to this, Miss Prettyman made some remarks intended to be wise and kind at the same time. Grace, whose eyes

were laden with tears, made no immediate reply to this, but reverted to her former statement, that she must go home. "I cannot remain, Miss Prettyman; I am so unhappy."

"Will you be more happy at home?"

"I can bear it better there."

The poor girl soon learned from the intended consolations of those around her, from the ill-considered kindnesses of the pupils, and from words which fell from the servants, that her father had in fact been judged to be guilty as far as judgment had as yet gone. "They do say, miss, it's only because he hadn't a lawyer," said the housekeeper. And if men so kind as Lord Lufton and Mr. Walker had made him out to be guilty, what could be expected from a stern judge down from London, who would know nothing about her poor father and his peculiarities, and from twelve jurymen who would be shopkeepers out of Barchester. It would kill her father, and then it would kill her mother; and after that it would kill her also. And there was no money in the house at home. She knew it well. She had been paid three pounds a month for her services at the school, and the money for the last two months had been sent to her mother. Yet, badly as she wanted anything that she might be able to earn, she knew that she could not go on teaching. It had come to be acknowledged by both the Miss Prettymans that any teaching on her part for the present was impossible. She would go home and perish with the rest of them. There was no room left for hope to her, or to any of her family. They had accused her father of being a common thief,—her father whom she knew to be so nobly honest, her father whom she believed to be among the most devoted of God's servants! He was accused of a paltry theft, and the magistrates and lawyers and policemen among them had decided that the accusation was true! How could she look the girls in the face after that, or attempt to hold her own among the teachers!

On the next morning there came the letter from Miss Lily Dale, and with that in her hand she again went to Miss Prettyman. She must go home, she said. She must at any rate see her mother. Could Miss Prettyman be kind enough to send her home. I haven't sixpence to pay for anything," she said, bursting out into tears; "and I haven't a right to ask for it." Then the statements which Miss Prettyman made in her eagerness to cover this latter misfortune were decidedly false. There was so much money owing to Grace, she said; money for this, money

for that, money for anything or nothing! Ten pounds would hardly clear the account. "Nobody owes me anything; but if you'll lend me five shillings!" said Grace in her agony. Miss Prettyman, as she made her way through this difficulty, thought of Major Grantly and his love. It would have been of no use, she knew. Had she brought them together on that Monday, Grace would have said nothing to him. Indeed such a meeting at such a time would have been improper. But, regarding Major Grantly, as she did, in the light of a millionnaire,—for the wealth of the archdeacon was notorious,—she could not but think it a pity that poor Grace should be begging for five shillings. "You need not at any rate trouble yourself about money, Grace," said Miss Prettyman. "What is a pound or two more or less between you and me? It is almost unkind of you to think about it. Is that letter in your hand anything for me to see, my dear?" Then Grace explained that she did not wish to show Miss Dale's letter, but that Miss Dale had asked her to go to Allington. "And you will go," said Miss Prettyman. "It will be the best thing for you, and the best thing for your mother."

It was at last decided that Grace should go to her friend at Allington, and to Allington she went. She returned home for a day or two, and was persuaded by her mother to accept the invitation that had been given her. At Hogglestock, while she was there, new troubles came up, of which something shall shortly be told; but they were troubles in which Grace could give no assistance to her mother, and which, indeed, though they were in truth troubles, as will be seen, were so far beneficent that they stirred her father up to a certain action which was in itself salutary. "I think it will be better that you should be away, dearest," said the mother, who now, for the first time, heard plainly all that poor Grace had to tell about Major Grantly;—Grace having, heretofore, barely spoken, in most ambiguous words, of Major Grantly as a gentleman whom she had met at Framley and whom she had described as being "very nice."

In old days, long ago, Lucy Robarts, the present Lady Lufton, sister of the Rev. Mark Robarts the parson of Framley, had sojourned for a while under Mr. Crawley's roof at Hogglestock. Peculiar circumstances, which need not, perhaps, be told here, had given occasion for this visit. She had then resolved,—for her future destiny had been known to her before she left Mrs. Crawley's house,—that she would in coming days do much to befriend the family of her friend; but the

doing of much had been very difficult. And the doing of anything had come to be very difficult through a certain indiscretion on Lord Lufton's part. Lord Lufton had offered assistance, pecuniary assistance, to Mr. Crawley, which Mr. Crawley had rejected with outspoken anger. What was Lord Lufton to him that his lordship should dare to come to him with his paltry money in his hand? But after a while, Lady Lufton, exercising some cunning in the operations of her friendship, had persuaded her sister-in-law at the Framley parsonage to have Grace Crawley over there as a visitor,—and there she had been during the summer holidays previous to the commencement of our story. And there, at Framley, she had become acquainted with Major Grantly, who was staying with Lord Lufton at Framley Court. She had then said something to her mother about Major Grantly, something ambiguous, something about his being "very nice," and the mother had thought how great was the pity that her daughter, who was "nice" too in her estimation, should have so few of those adjuncts to assist her which come from full pockets. She had thought no more about it then; but now she felt herself constrained to think more. "I don't quite understand why he should have come to Miss Prettyman on Monday," said Grace, "because he hardly knows her at all."

"I suppose it was on business," said Mrs. Crawley.

"No, mamma, it was not on business."

'How can you tell, dear?"

"Because Miss Prettyman said it was,—it was—to ask after me. Oh, mamma, I must tell you. I know he did like me."

"Did he ever say so to you, dearest?"

"Yes, mamma."

"And what did you tell him?"

"I told him nothing, mamma."

"And did he ask to see you on Monday?"

"No, mamma; I don't think he did. I think he understood it all too well, for I could not have spoken to him then."

Mrs. Crawley pursued the cross-examination no further, but made up her mind that it would be better that her girl should be away from her wretched home during this period of her life. If it were written in the book of fate that one of her children should be exempted from the series of misfortunes which seemed to fall, one after another, almost as a matter of course, upon her husband, upon her, and upon her family;—

if so great good fortune were in store for her Grace as such a marriage as this which seemed to be so nearly offered to her, it might probably be well that Grace should be as little at home as possible. Mrs. Crawley had heard nothing but good of Major Grantly; but she knew that the Grantlys were proud rich people,—who lived with their heads high up in the county,—and it could hardly be that a son of the archdeacon would like to take his bride direct from Hogglestock parsonage.

It was settled that Grace should go to Allington as soon as a letter could be received from Miss Dale in return to Grace's note, and on the third morning after her arrival at home she started. None but they who have themselves been poor gentry,—gentry so poor as not to know how to raise a shilling,—can understand the peculiar bitterness of the trials which such poverty produces. The poverty of the normal poor does not approach it; or, rather, the pangs arising from such poverty are altogether of a different sort. To be hungry and have no food, to be cold and have no fuel, to be threatened with distraint for one's few chairs and tables, and with the loss of the roof over one's head,—all these miseries, which, if they do not positively reach, are so frequently near to reaching the normal poor, are, no doubt, the severest of the trials to which humanity is subjected. They threaten life,—or, if not life, then liberty,—reducing the abject one to a choice between captivity and starvation. By hook or crook, the poor gentleman or poor lady,—let the one or the other be ever so poor,—does not often come to the last extremity of the workhouse. There are such cases, but they are exceptional. Mrs. Crawley, through all her sufferings, had never yet found her cupboard to be absolutely bare, or the bread-pan to be actually empty. But there are pangs to which, at the time, starvation itself would seem to be preferable. The angry eyes of unpaid tradesmen, savage with an anger which one knows to be justifiable; the taunt of the poor servant who wants her wages; the gradual relinquishment of habits which the soft nurture of earlier, kinder years had made second nature; the wan cheeks of the wife whose malady demands wine; the rags of the husband whose outward occupations demand decency; the neglected children, who are learning not to be the children of gentlefolk; and, worse than all, the alms and doles of half-generous friends, the waning pride, the pride that will not wane, the growing doubt whether it be not better to bow the head, and acknowledge to all the world that nothing of the pride of station is left,

—that the hand is open to receive and ready to touch the cap, that the fall from the upper to the lower level has been accomplished,—these are the pangs of poverty which drive the Crawleys of the world to the frequent entertaining of that idea of the bare bodkin. It was settled that Grace should go to Allington;—but how about her clothes? And then, whence was to come the price of her journey?

"I don't think they'll mind about my being shabby at Allington. They live very quietly there."

"But you say that Miss Dale is so very nice in all her ways."

"Lily is very nice, mamma; but I shan't mind her so much as her mother, because she knows it all. I have told her everything."

"But you have given me all your money, dearest."

"Miss Prettyman told me I was to come to her," said Grace, who had already taken some small sum from the schoolmistress, which at once had gone into her mother's pocket, and into household purposes. "She said I should be sure to go to Allington, and that of course I should go to her, as I must pass through Silverbridge."

"I hope papa will not ask about it," said Mrs. Crawley. Luckily papa did not ask about it, being at the moment occupied much with other thoughts and other troubles, and Grace was allowed to return by Silverbridge, and to take what was needed from Miss Prettyman. Who can tell of the mending and patching, of the weary wearing midnight hours of needle-work which were accomplished before the poor girl went, so that she might not reach her friend's house in actual rags? And when the work was ended, what was there to show for it? I do not think that the idea of the bare bodkin, as regarded herself, ever flitted across Mrs. Crawley's brain,—she being one of those who are very strong to endure; but it must have occurred to her very often that the repose of the grave is sweet, and that there cometh after death a levelling and making even of things, which would at last cure all her evils.

Grace no doubt looked forward to a levelling and making even of things,—or perhaps even to something more prosperous than that which should come to her relief on this side of the grave. She could not but have high hopes in regard to her future destiny. Although, as has been said, she understood no more than she ought to have understood from Miss Prettyman's account of the conversation with Major Grantly, still, innocent as she was, she had understood much. She knew that the man loved her, and she knew also that she loved the man. She

thoroughly comprehended that the present could be to her no time for listening to speeches of love, or for giving kind answers; but still I think that she did look for relief on this side of the grave.

"Tut, tut," said Miss Prettyman as Grace in vain tried to conceal her tears up in the private sanctum. "You ought to know me by this time, and to have learned that I can understand things." The tears had flown in return not only for the five gold sovereigns which Miss Prettyman had pressed into her hand, but on account of the prettiest, soft, grey merino frock that ever charmed a girl's eye. "I should like to know how many girls I have given dresses to when they have been going out visiting. Law, my dear; they take them, many of them, from us old maids, almost as if we were only paying our debts in giving them." And then Miss Anne gave her a cloth cloak, very warm, with pretty buttons and gimp trimmings,—just such a cloak as any girl might like to wear who thought that she would be seen out walking by her Major Grantly on a Christmas morning. Grace Crawley did not expect to be seen out walking by her Major Grantly, but nevertheless she liked the cloak. By the power of her practical will, and by her true sympathy, the elder Miss Prettyman had for a while conquered the annoyance which, on Grace's part, was attached to the receiving of gifts, by the consciousness of her poverty; and when Miss Anne, with some pride in the tone of her voice, expressed a hope that Grace would think the cloak pretty, Grace put her arms pleasantly round her friend's neck, and declared that it was very pretty,—the prettiest cloak in all the world!

Grace was met at the Guestwick railway-station by her friend Lilian Dale, and was driven over to Allington in a pony carriage belonging to Lilian's uncle, the squire of the parish. I think she will be excused in having put on her new cloak, not so much because of the cold as with a view of making the best of herself before Mrs. Dale. And yet she knew that Mrs. Dale would know all the circumstances of her poverty, and was very glad that it should be so. "I am so glad that you have come, dear," said Lily. "It will be such a comfort."

"I am sure you are very good," said Grace.

"And mamma is so glad. From the moment that we both talked ourselves into eagerness about it,—while I was writing my letter, you know, we resolved that it must be so."

"I'm afraid I shall be a great trouble to Mrs. Dale."

"A trouble to mamma! Indeed you will not. You shall be a

trouble to no one but me. I will have all the trouble myself, and the labour I delight in shall physic my pain."

Grace Crawley could not during the journey be at home and at ease even with her friend Lily. She was going to a strange house under strange circumstances. Her father had not indeed been tried and found guilty of theft, but the charge of theft had been made against him, and the magistrates before whom it had been made had thought that the charge was true. Grace knew that all the local newspapers had told the story, and was of course aware that Mrs. Dale would have heard it. Her own mind was full of it, and though she dreaded to speak of it, yet she could not be silent. Miss Dale, who understood much of this, endeavoured to talk her friend into easiness; but she feared to begin upon the one subject, and before the drive was over they were, both of them, too cold for much conversation. "There's mamma," said Miss Dale as they drove up, turning out of the street of the village to the door of Mrs. Dale's house. "She always knows, by instinct, when I am coming. You must understand, now that you are among us, that mamma and I are not mother and daughter, but two loving old ladies, living together in peace and harmony. We do have our quarrels,—whether the chicken shall be roast or boiled, but never anything beyond that. Mamma, here is Grace, starved to death; and she says if you don't give her some tea she will go back at once."

"I will give her some tea," said Mrs. Dale.

"And I am worse than she is, because I've been driving. It's all up with Bertram and Mr. Green for the next week at least. It is freezing as hard as it can freeze, and they might as well try to hunt in Lapland as here."

"They'll console themselves with skating," said Mrs. Dale.

"Have you ever observed, Grace," said Miss Dale, "how much amusement gentlemen require, and how imperative it is that some other game should be provided when one game fails?"

"Not particularly," said Grace.

"Oh, but it is so. Now, with women, it is supposed that they can amuse themselves or live without amusement. Once or twice in a year, perhaps, something is done for them. There is an arrow-shooting party, or a ball, or a picnic. But the catering for men's sport is never-ending, and is always paramount to everything else. And yet the pet game of the day never goes off properly. In partridge time, the partridges

are wild, and won't come to be killed. In hunting time the foxes won't run straight,—the wretches. They show no spirit, and will take to ground to save their brushes. Then comes a nipping frost, and skating is proclaimed; but the ice is always rough, and the woodcocks have deserted the country. And as for salmon! When the summer comes round I do really believe that they suffer a great deal about the salmon. I'm sure they never catch any. So they go back to their clubs, and their cards, and their billiards, and abuse their cooks and blackball their friends. That's about it, mamma; is it not?"

"You know more about it than I do, my dear."

"Because I have to listen to Bertram, as you never will do. We've got such a Mr. Green down here, Grace. He's such a duck of a man,—such top-boots and all the rest of it. And yet they whisper to me that he doesn't ride always to hounds. And to see him play billiards is beautiful, only he never can make a stroke. I hope you play billiards, Grace, because uncle Christopher has just had a new table put up."

"I never saw a billiard-table yet," said Grace.

"Then Mr. Green shall teach you. He'll do anything that you ask him. If you don't approve the colour of the ball, he'll go to London at once to get you another one. Only you must be very careful about saying that you like anything before him, as he'll be sure to have it for you the next day. Mamma happened to say that she wanted a fourpenny postage-stamp, and he walked off to Guestwick to get it for her instantly, although it was lunch-time."

"He did nothing of the kind, Lily," said her mother. "He was going to Guestwick, and was very good-natured, and brought me back a postage-stamp that I wanted."

"Of course he's good-natured; I know that. And there's my cousin Bertram. He's Captain Dale, you know. But he prefers to be called Mr. Dale, because he has left the army, and has set up as junior squire of the parish. Uncle Christopher is the real squire; only Bertram does all the work. And now you know all about us. I'm afraid you'll find us dull enough,—unless you can take a fancy to Mr. Green."

"Does Mr. Green live here?" asked Grace.

"No; he does not live here. I never heard of his living anywhere. He was something once, but I don't know what; and I don't think

he's anything now in particular. But he's Bertram's friend, and like most men, as one sees them, he never has much to do. Does Major Grantly ever go forth to fight his country's battles?" This last question she asked in a low whisper, so that the words did not reach her mother. Grace blushed up to her eyes, however, as she answered,—

"I think that Major Grantly has left the army."

"We shall get her round in a day or two, mamma," said Lily Dale to her mother that night. "I'm sure it will be the best thing to force her to talk of her troubles."

"I would not use too much force, my dear."

"Things are better when they're talked about. I'm sure they are. And it will be good to make her accustomed to speak of Major Grantly. From what Mary Walker tells me, he certainly means it. And if so, she should be ready for it when it comes."

"Do not make her ready for what may never come."

"No, mamma; but she is at present such a child that she knows nothing of her own powers. She should be made to understand that it is possible that even a Major Grantly may think himself fortunate in being allowed to love her."

"I should leave all that to Nature, if I were you," said Mrs. Dale.

CHAPTER X.

DINNER AT FRAMLEY COURT.

Lord Lufton, as he drove home to Framley after the meeting of the magistrates at Silverbridge, discussed the matter with his brother-in-law, Mark Robarts, the clergyman. Lord Lufton was driving a dog-cart, and went along the road at the rate of twelve miles an hour. "I'll tell you what it is, Mark," he said, "that man is innocent; but if he won't employ lawyers at his trial, the jury will find him guilty."

"I don't know what to think about it," said the clergyman.

"Were you in the room when he protested so vehemently that he didn't know where he got the money?"

"I was in the room all the time."

"And did you not believe him when he said that?"

"Yes,—I think I did."

"Anybody must have believed him,—except old Tempest, who never believes anybody, and Fothergill, who always suspects everybody. The truth is, that he had found the cheque and put it by, and did not remember anything about it."

"But, Lufton, surely that would amount to stealing it."

"Yes, if it wasn't that he is such a poor, cracked, crazy creature, with his mind all abroad. I think Soames did drop his book in his house. I'm sure Soames would not say so unless he was quite confident. Somebody has picked it up, and in some way the cheque has got into Crawley's hand. Then he has locked it up and has forgotten all about it; and when that butcher threatened him, he has put his hand upon it, and he has thought, or believed, that it had come from Soames or from the dean,—or from heaven, if you will. When a man is so crazy as that, you can't judge of him as you do of others."

"But a jury must judge of him as it would of others."

"And therefore there should be a lawyer to tell the jury what to do. They should have somebody up out of the parish to show that he is beside himself half his time. His wife would be the best person, only it would be hard lines on her."

"Very hard. And after all he would only escape by being shown to be mad."

"And he is mad."

"Mrs. Proudie would come upon him in such a case as that, and sequester his living."

"And what will Mrs. Proudie do when he's a convicted thief? Simply unfrock him, and take away his living altogether. Nothing on earth should induce me to find him guilty if I were on a jury."

"But you have committed him."

"Yes,—I've been one, at least, in doing so. I simply did what Walker told us we must do. A magistrate is not left to himself as a juryman is. I'd eat the biggest pair of boots in Barchester before I found him guilty. I say, Mark, you must talk it over with the women,

and see what can be done for them. Lucy tells me that they're so poor, that if they have bread to eat, it's as much as they have."

On this evening Archdeacon Grantly and his wife dined and slept at Framley Court, there having been a very long family friendship between old Lady Lufton and the Grantlys, and Dr. Thorne, with his wife, from Chaldicotes, also dined at Framley. There was also there another clergyman from Barchester, Mr. Champion, one of the prebendaries of the cathedral. There were only three now who had houses in the city since the retrenchments of the Ecclesiastical Commission had come into full force. And this Mr. Champion was dear to the Dowager Lady Lufton, because he carried on worthily the clerical war against the bishop which had raged in Barsetshire ever since Dr. Proudie had come there,—which war old Lady Lufton, good and pious and charitable as she was, considered that she was bound to keep up, even to the knife, till Dr. Proudie and all his satellites should have been banished into outer darkness. As the light of the Proudies still shone brightly, it was probable that poor old Lady Lufton might die before her battle was accomplished. She often said that it would be so, but when so saying, always expressed a wish that the fight might be carried on after her death. "I shall never, never rest in my grave," she had once said to the archdeacon, "while that woman sits in your father's palace." For the archdeacon's father had been Bishop of Barchester before Dr. Proudie. What mode of getting rid of the bishop or his wife Lady Lufton proposed to herself, I am unable to say; but I think she lived in hopes that in some way it might be done. If only the bishop could have been found to have stolen a cheque for twenty pounds instead of poor Mr. Crawley, Lady Lufton would, I think, have been satisfied.

In the course of these battles Framley Court would sometimes assume a clerical aspect,—have a prevailing hue, as it were, of black coats, which was not altogether to the taste of Lord Lufton, and as to which he would make complaint to his wife, and to Mark Robarts, himself a clergyman. "There's more of this than I can stand," he'd say to the latter. "There's a deuced deal more of it than you like yourself, I know."

"It's not for me to like or dislike. It's a great thing having your mother in the parish"

"That's all very well; and of course she'll do as she likes. She may ask whom she pleases here, and I shan't interfere. It's the same as

though it was her own house. But I shall take Lucy to Lufton." Now Lord Lufton had been building his house at Lufton for the last seven years, and it was not yet finished,—or nearly finished, if all that his wife and mother said was true. And if they could have their way, it never would be finished. And so, in order that Lord Lufton might not be actually driven away by the turmoils of ecclesiastical contest, the younger Lady Lufton would endeavour to moderate both the wrath and the zeal of the elder one, and would struggle against the coming clergymen. On this day, however, three sat at the board at Framley, and Lady Lufton, in her justification to her son, swore that the invitation had been given by her daughter-in-law. "You know, my dear," the dowager said to Lord Lufton, "something must be done for these poor Crawleys; and as the dean is away Lucy wants to speak to the archdeacon about them."

"And the archdeacon could not subscribe his ten-pound note without having Mr. Champion to back him?"

"My dear Ludovic, you do put it in such a way."

"Never mind, mother. I've no special dislike to Champion; only as you are not paid five thousand a year for your trouble, it is rather hard that you should have to do all the work of opposition bishop in the diocese."

It was felt by them all,—including Lord Lufton himself, who became so interested in the matter as to forgive the black coats before the evening was over,—that this matter of Mr. Crawley's committal was very serious, and demanded the full energies of their party. It was known to them all that the feeling at the palace was inimical to Mr. Crawley. "That she-Beelzebub hates him for his poverty, and because Arabin brought him into the diocese," said the archdeacon, permitting himself to use very strong language in his allusion to the bishop's wife. It must be recorded on his behalf that he used the phrase in the presence only of the gentlemen of the party. I think he might have whispered the word into the ear of his confidential friend old Lady Lufton, and perhaps have given no offence; but he would not have ventured to use such words aloud in the presence of ladies.

"You forget, archdeacon," said Dr. Thorne, laughing, "that the she-Beelzebub is my wife's particular friend."

"Not a bit of it," said the archdeacon. "Your wife knows better than that. You tell her what I call her, and if she complains of the

name, I'll unsay it." It may therefore be supposed that Dr. Thorne, and Mrs. Thorne, and the archdeacon, knew each other intimately, and understood each other's feelings on these matters.

It was quite true that the palace party was inimical to Mr. Crawley. Mr. Crawley undoubtedly was poor, and had not been so submissive to episcopal authority as it behoves any clergyman to be whose loaves and fishes are scanty. He had raised his back more than once against orders emanating from the palace in a manner that had made the hairs on the head of the bishop's wife to stand almost on end, and had taken as much upon himself as though his living had been worth twelve hundred a year. Mrs. Proudie, almost as energetic in her language as the archdeacon, had called him a beggarly perpetual curate. "We must have perpetual curates, my dear," the bishop had said. "They should know their places then. But what can you expect of a creature from the deanery? All that ought to be altered. The dean should have no patronage in the diocese. No dean should have any patronage. It is an abuse from the beginning to the end. Dean Arabin, if he had any conscience, would be doing the duty at Hogglestock himself." How the bishop strove to teach his wife, with mildest words, what really ought to be a dean's duty, and how the wife rejoined by teaching her husband, not in the mildest words, what ought to be a bishop's duty, we will not further inquire here. The fact that such dialogues took place at the palace is recorded simply to show that the palatial feeling in Barchester ran counter to Mr. Crawley.

And this was cause enough, if no other cause existed, for partiality to Mr. Crawley at Framley Court. But, as has been partly explained, there existed, if possible, even stronger ground than this for adherence to the Crawley cause. The younger Lady Lufton had known the Crawleys intimately, and the elder Lady Lufton had reckoned them among the neighbouring clerical families of her acquaintance. Both these ladies were therefore staunch in their defence of Mr. Crawley. The archdeacon himself had his own reasons,—reasons which for the present he kept altogether within his own bosom,—for wishing that Mr. Crawley had never entered the diocese. Whether the perpetual curate should or should not be declared to be a thief, it would be terrible to him to have to call the child of that perpetual curate his daughter-in-law. But not the less on this occasion was he true to his order, true to his side in the diocese, true to his hatred of the palace.

"I don't believe it for a moment," he said, as he took his place on the rug before the fire in the drawing-room when the gentlemen came in from their wine. The ladies understood at once what it was that he couldn't believe. Mr. Crawley had for the moment so usurped the county that nobody thought of talking of anything else.

"How is it, then," said Mrs. Thorne, "that Lord Lufton, and my husband, and the other wiseacres at Silverbridge, have committed him for trial?"

"Because we were told to do so by the lawyer," said Dr. Thorne.

"Ladies will never understand that magistrates must act in accordance with the law," said Lord Lufton.

"But you all say he's not guilty," said Mrs. Robarts.

"The fact is, that the magistrates cannot try the question," said the archdeacon; "they only hear the primary evidence. In this case I don't believe Crawley would ever have been committed if he had employed an attorney, instead of speaking for himself."

"Why didn't somebody make him have an attorney?" said Lady Lufton.

"I don't think any attorney in the world could have spoken for him better than he spoke for himself," said Dr. Thorne.

"And yet you committed him," said his wife. "What can we do for him? Can't we pay the bail and send him off to America?"

"A jury will never find him guilty," said Lord Lufton.

"And what is the truth of it?" asked the younger Lady Lufton.

Then the whole matter was discussed again, and it was settled among them all that Mr. Crawley had undoubtedly appropriated the cheque through temporary obliquity of judgment,—obliquity of judgment and forgetfulness as to the source from whence the cheque had come to him. "He has picked it up about the house, and then has thought that it was his own," said Lord Lufton. Had they come to the conclusion that such an appropriation of money had been made by one of the clergy of the palace, by one of the Proudeian party, they would doubtless have been very loud and very bitter as to the iniquity of the offender. They would have said much as to the weakness of the bishop and the wickedness of the bishop's wife, and would have declared the appropriator to have been as very a thief as ever picked a pocket or opened a till;—but they were unanimous in their acquittal of Mr. Crawley. It had not been his intention, they said, to be a

thief, and a man should be judged only by his intention. It must now be their object to induce a Barchester jury to look at the matter in the same light.

"When they come to understand how the land lies," said the archdeacon, "they will be all right. There's not a tradesman in the city who does not hate that woman as though she were——"

"Archdeacon," said his wife, cautioning him to repress his energy.

"Their bills are all paid by this new chaplain they've got, and he is made to claim discount on every leg of mutton," said the archdeacon. Arguing from which fact,—or from which assertion, he came to the conclusion that no Barchester jury would find Mr. Crawley guilty.

But it was agreed on all sides that it would not be well to trust to the unassisted friendship of the Barchester tradesmen. Mr. Crawley must be provided with legal assistance, and this must be furnished to him whether he should be willing or unwilling to receive it. That there would be a difficulty was acknowledged. Mr. Crawley was known to be a man not easy of persuasion, with a will of his own, with a great energy of obstinacy on points which he chose to take up as being of importance to his calling, or to his own professional status. He had pleaded his own cause before the magistrates, and it might be that he would insist on doing the same thing before the judge. At last Mr. Robarts, the clergyman, of Framley, was deputed from the knot of Crawleian advocates assembled in Lady Lufton's drawing-room, to undertake the duty of seeing Mr. Crawley, and of explaining to him that his proper defence was regarded as a matter appertaining to the clergy and gentry generally of that part of the country, and that for the sake of the clergy and gentry the defence must of course be properly conducted. In such circumstances the expense of the defence would of course be borne by the clergy and gentry concerned. It was thought that Mr. Robarts could put the matter to Mr. Crawley with such a mixture of the strength of manly friendship and the softness of clerical persuasion, as to overcome the recognized difficulties of the task.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BISHOP SENDS HIS INHIBITION.

TIDINGS of Mr. Crawley's fate reached the palace at Barchester on the afternoon of the day on which the magistrates had committed him. All such tidings travel very quickly, conveyed by imperceptible wires, and distributed by indefatigable message boys whom Rumour seems to supply for the purpose. Barchester is twenty miles from Silverbridge by road, and more than forty by railway. I doubt whether any one was commissioned to send the news along the actual telegraph, and yet Mrs. Proudie knew it before four o'clock. But she did not know it quite accurately. "Bishop," she said, standing at her husband's study-door; "they have committed that man to gaol. There was no help for them unless they had forsworn themselves."

"Not forsworn themselves, my dear," said the bishop, striving, as was usual with him, by some meek and ineffectual word to teach his wife that she was occasionally led by her energy into error. He never persisted in the lessons when he found, as was usual, that they were taken amiss.

"I say forsworn themselves!" said Mrs. Proudie; "and now what do you mean to do? This is Thursday, and of course the man must not be allowed to desecrate the church of Hogglestock by performing the Sunday services."

"If he has been committed, my dear, and is in prison——"

"I said nothing about prison, bishop."

"Gaol, my dear."

"I say they have committed him to gaol. So my informant tells me. But of course all the Plumstead and Framley set will move heaven and earth to get him out, so that he may be there as a disgrace to the diocese. I wonder how the dean will feel when he hears of it! I do, indeed. For the dean, though he is an idle, useless man, with

no church principles, and no real piety, still he has a conscience. I think he has a conscience."

"I'm sure he has, my dear."

"Well;—let us hope so. And if he has a conscience, what must be his feelings when he hears that this creature whom he brought into the diocese has been committed to gaol along with common felons."

"Not with felons, my dear; at least I should think not."

"I say with common felons! A downright robbery of twenty pounds, just as though he had broken into the bank! And so he did, with sly artifice, which is worse in such hands than a crowbar. And now what are we to do? Here is Thursday, and something must be done before Sunday for the souls of those poor benighted creatures at Hogglestock."

Mrs. Proudie was ready for the battle, and was even now sniffing the blood afar-off. "I believe it's a hundred and thirty pounds a year," she said, before the bishop had collected his thoughts sufficiently for a reply.

"I think we must find out, first of all, whether he is really to be shut up in prison," said the bishop.

"And suppose he is not to be shut up? Suppose they have been weak, or untrue to their duty—and from what we know of the magistrates of Barsetshire, there is too much reason to suppose that they will have been so; suppose they have let him out, is he to go about like a roaring lion,—among the souls of the people?"

The bishop shook in his shoes. When Mrs. Proudie began to talk of the souls of the people he always shook in his shoes. She had an eloquent way of raising her voice over the word souls that was qualified to make any ordinary man shake in his shoes. The bishop was a conscientious man, and well knew that poor Mr. Crawley, even though he might have become a thief under terrible temptation, would not roar at Hogglestock to the injury of any man's soul. He was aware that this poor clergyman had done his duty laboriously and efficiently, and he was also aware that though he might have been committed by the magistrates, and then let out upon bail, he should not be regarded now, in these days before his trial, as a convicted thief. But to explain all this to Mrs. Proudie was beyond his power. He knew well that she would not hear a word in mitigation of Mr. Crawley's presumed offence. Mr. Crawley belonged to the other party, and Mrs. Proudie was a thorough-going partisan. I know a man,—an excellent fellow, who, being

himself a strong politician, constantly expresses a belief that all politicians opposed to him are thieves, child-murderers, parricides, lovers of incest, demons upon the earth. He is a strong partisan, but not, I think, so strong as Mrs. Proudie. He says that he believes all evil of his opponents; but she really believed the evil. The archdeacon had called Mrs. Proudie a she-Beelzebub; but that was a simple ebullition of mortal hatred. He believed her to be simply a vulgar, interfering, brazen-faced virago. Mrs. Proudie in truth believed that the archdeacon was an actual emanation from Satan, sent to those parts to devour souls, —as she would call it,—and that she herself was an emanation of another sort, sent from another source expressly to Barchester, to prevent such devouring, as far as it might possibly be prevented by a mortal agency. The bishop knew it all,—understood it all. He regarded the archdeacon as a clergyman belonging to a party opposed to his party, and he disliked the man. He knew that from his first coming into the diocese he had been encountered with enmity by the archdeacon and the archdeacon's friends. If left to himself he could feel and to a certain extent could resent such enmity. But he had no faith in his wife's doctrine of emanations. He had no faith in many things which she believed religiously;—and yet what could he do? If he attempted to explain, she would stop him before he had got through the first half of his first sentence.

"If he is out on bail——," commenced the bishop.

"Of course he will be out on bail."

"Then I think he should feel——"

"Feel! such men never feel! What feeling can one expect from a convicted thief?"

"Not convicted as yet, my dear," said the bishop.

"A convicted thief!" repeated Mrs. Proudie; and she vociferated the words in such a tone that the bishop resolved that he would for the future let the word convicted pass without notice. After all she was only using the phrase in a peculiar sense given to it by herself.

"It won't be proper, certainly, that he should do the services," suggested the bishop.

"Proper! It would be a scandal to the whole diocese. How could he raise his head as he pronounced the eighth commandment? That must be at least prevented."

The bishop, who was seated, fretted himself in his chair, moving

about with little movements. He knew that there was a misery coming upon him; and, as far as he could see, it might become a great misery, a huge blistering sore upon him. When miseries came to him, as they did not infrequently, he would unconsciously endeavour to fathom them and weigh them, and then, with some gallantry, resolve to bear them, if he could find that their depth and weight were not too great for his powers of endurance. He would let the cold wind whistle by him, putting up the collar of his coat, and would encounter the winter weather without complaint. And he would be patient under the hot sun, knowing well that tranquillity is best for those who have to bear tropical heat. But when the storm threatened to knock him off his legs, when the earth beneath him became too hot for his poor tender feet, —what could he do then? There had been with him such periods of misery, during which he had wailed inwardly and had confessed to himself that the wife of his bosom was too much for him. Now the storm seemed to be coming very roughly. It would be demanded of him that he should exercise certain episcopal authority which he knew did not belong to him. Now, episcopal authority admits of being stretched or contracted, according to the character of the bishop who uses it. It is not always easy for a bishop himself to know what he may do, and what he may not do. He may certainly give advice to any clergyman in his diocese, and he may give it in such form that it will have in it something of authority. Such advice coming from a dominant bishop to a clergyman with a submissive mind has in it very much of authority. But Bishop Proudie knew that Mr. Crawley was not a clergyman with a submissive mind, and he feared that he himself, as regarded from Mr. Crawley's point of view, was not a dominant bishop. And yet he could only act by advice. "I will write to him," said the bishop, "and will explain to him that as he is circumstanced he should not appear in the reading desk."

"Of course he must not appear in the reading desk. That scandal must at any rate be inhibited." Now the bishop did not at all like the use of the word inhibited, understanding well that Mrs. Proudie intended it to be understood as implying some episcopal command against which there should be no appeal;—but he let it pass.

"I will write to him, my dear, to-night."

"And Mr. Thumble can go over with the letter the first thing in the morning."

"Will not the post be better?"

"No, bishop; certainly not."

"He would get it sooner, if I write to-night, my dear."

"In either case he will get it to-morrow morning. An hour or two will not signify, and if Mr. Thumble takes it himself we shall know how it is received. It will be well that Thumble should be there in person as he will want to look for lodgings in the parish."

"But, my dear——"

"Well, bishop?"

"About lodgings? I hardly think that Mr. Thumble, if we decide that Mr. Thumble shall undertake the duty——"

"We have decided that Mr. Thumble should undertake the duty. That is decided."

"But I do not think he should trouble himself to look for lodgings at Hogglestock. He can go over on the Sundays."

"And who is to do the parish work? Would you have that man, a convicted thief, to look after the schools, and visit the sick, and perhaps attend the dying?"

"There will be a great difficulty; there will indeed," said the bishop, becoming very unhappy, and feeling that he was driven by circumstances either to assert his own knowledge or teach his wife something of the law with reference to his position as a bishop. "Who is to pay Mr. Thumble?"

"The income of the parish must be sequestrated, and he must be paid out of that? Of course he must have the income while he does the work."

"But my dear, I cannot sequestrate the man's income."

"I don't believe it, bishop. If the bishop cannot sequestrate it, who can? But you are always timid in exercising the authority put into your hands for wise purposes. Not sequestrate the income of a man who has been proved to be a thief! You leave that to us, and we will manage it." The "us" here named comprised Mrs. Proudie and the bishop's managing chaplain.

Then the bishop was left alone for an hour to write the letter which Mr. Thumble was to carry over to Mr. Crawley,—and after a while he did write it. Before he commenced the task, however, he sat for some moments in his arm-chair close by the fireside, asking himself whether it might not be possible for him to overcome his enemy in this matter.

How would it go with him suppose he were to leave the letter unwritten, and send in a message by his chaplain to Mrs. Proudie, saying that as Mr. Crawley was out on bail, the parish might be left for the present without episcopal interference? She could not make him interfere. She could not force him to write the letter. So, at least, he said to himself. But as he said it, he almost thought that she could do these things. In the last thirty years, or more, she had ever contrived by some power latent in her to have her will effected. But what would happen, if now, even now, he were to rebel? That he would personally become very uncomfortable, he was well aware, but he thought that he could bear that. The food would become bad,—mere ashes between his teeth; the daily modicum of wine would lose its flavour; the chimneys would all smoke; the wind would come from the east, and the servants would not answer the bell. Little miseries of that kind would crowd upon him. He had arrived at a time of life in which such miseries make such men very miserable; but yet he thought that he could endure them. And what other wretchedness would come to him? She would scold him, frightfully, loudly, scornfully, and worse than all, continually. But of this he had so much habitually, that anything added might be borne also;—if only he could be sure that the scoldings should go on in private, that the world of the palace should not be allowed to hear the revilings to which he would be subjected. But to be scolded publicly was the great evil which he dreaded beyond all evils. He was well aware that the palace would know his misfortune, that it was known, and freely discussed by all, from the examining chaplain down to the palace boot-boy;—nay, that it was known to all the diocese; but yet he could smile upon those around him, and look as though he held his own like other men,—unless when open violence was displayed. But when that voice was heard aloud along the corridors of the palace, and when he was summoned imperiously by the woman, calling for her bishop, so that all Barchester heard it, and when he was compelled to creep forth from his study, at the sound of that summons, with distressed face, and shaking hands, and short, hurrying steps,—a being to be pitied even by a deacon,—not venturing to assume an air of masterdom should he chance to meet a housemaid on the stairs,—then, at such moments as that, he would feel that any submission was better than the misery which he suffered. And he well knew that should he now rebel, the whole house would

be in a turmoil. He would be bishoped here, and bishoped there, before the eyes of all palatial men and women, till life would be a burden to him. So he got up from his seat over the fire, and went to his desk and wrote the letter. The letter was as follows:—

"The Palace, Barchester, —— December, 186—.

"REVEREND SIR,"—(he left out the dear, because he knew that if he inserted it he would be compelled to write the letter over again,)—"I have heard to-day with the greatest trouble of spirit, that you have been taken before a bench of magistrates assembled at Silverbridge, having been previously arrested by the police in your parsonage-house at Hogglestock, and that the magistrates of Silverbridge have committed you to take your trial at the next assizes at Barchester, on a charge of theft.

"Far be it from me to prejudge the case. You will understand, reverend sir, that I express no opinion whatever as to your guilt or innocence in this matter. If you have been guilty, may the Lord give you grace to repent of your great sin, and to make such amends as may come from immediate acknowledgment and confession. If you are innocent may He protect you, and make your innocence to shine before all men. In either case may the Lord be with you and keep your feet from further stumbling.

"But I write to you now as your bishop, to explain to you that, circumstanced as you are, you cannot with decency perform the church services of your parish. I have that confidence in you that I doubt not you will agree with me in this, and be grateful to me for relieving you so far from the immediate perplexities of your position. I have, therefore, appointed the Rev. Caleb Thumble to perform the duties of incumbent of Hogglestock till such time as a jury shall have decided upon your case at Barchester; and in order that you may at once become acquainted with Mr. Thumble, as will be most convenient that you should do, I will commission him to deliver this letter into your hand personally to-morrow, trusting that you will receive him with that brotherly spirit in which he is sent upon this painful mission.

"Touching the remuneration to which Mr. Thumble will become entitled for his temporary ministrations in the parish of Hogglestock, I do not at present lay down any strict injunction. He must, at any rate, be paid at a rate not less than that ordinarily afforded for a curate.

"I will once again express my fervent hope that the Lord may bring you to see the true state of your own soul, and that He may fill you with the grace of repentance, so that the bitter waters of the present hour may not pass over your head and destroy you.

"I have the honour to be,

"Reverend Sir,

"Your faithful servant in Christ,

"T. BARNUM." *

The bishop had hardly finished his letter when Mrs. Proudie returned to the study, followed by the Rev. Caleb Thumble. Mr. Thumble was a little man, about forty years of age, who had a wife and children living in Barchester, and who existed on such chance clerical crumbs as might fall from the table of the bishop's patronage. People in Barchester said that Mrs. Thumble was a cousin of Mrs. Proudie's; but as Mrs. Proudie stoutly denied the connection it may be supposed that the people of Barchester were wrong. Had Mr. Thumble's wife in truth been a cousin, Mrs. Proudie would surely have provided for him during the many years in which the diocese had been in her hands. No such provision had been made, and Mr. Thumble, who had now been living in the diocese for three years, had received nothing else from the bishop than such chance employment as this which he was now to undertake at Hogglestock. He was a humble, mild-voiced man when within the palace precincts, and had so far succeeded in making his way among his brethren in the cathedral city as to be employed not unfrequently for absent minor canons in chanting the week-day services, being remunerated for his work at the rate of about five shillings a service.

The bishop handed his letter to his wife, observing in an off-hand kind of way that she might as well see what he said. "Of course I shall read it," said Mrs. Proudie. And the bishop winced visibly, because Mr. Thumble was present. "Quite right," said Mrs. Proudie, quite right to let him know that you knew that he had been arrested, —actually arrested by the police."

* Baronum Castrum having been the old Roman name from which the modern Barchester is derived, the bishops of the diocese have always signed themselves Barnum.

"I thought it proper to mention that, because of the scandal," said the bishop.

"Oh, it has been terrible in the city," said Mr. Thumble.

"Never mind, Mr. Thumble," said Mrs. Proudie. "Never mind that at present." Then she continued to read the letter." What's this? Confession! That must come out, bishop. It will never do that you should recommend confession to anybody, under any circumstances."

"But, my dear——"

"It must come out, bishop."

"My lord has not meant auricular confession," suggested Mr. Thumble. Then Mrs. Proudie turned round and looked at Mr. Thumble, and Mr. Thumble nearly sank amidst the tables and chairs. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Proudie," he said. "I didn't mean to intrude."

"The word must come out, bishop," repeated Mrs. Proudie. "There should be no stumbling-blocks prepared for feet that are only too ready to fall." And the word did come out.

"Now, Mr. Thumble," said the lady, as she gave the letter to her satellite, "the bishop and I wish you to be at Hogglestock early to-morrow. You should be there not later than ten, certainly." Then she paused until Mr. Thumble had given the required promise. "And we request that you will be very firm in the mission which is confided to you, a mission which, as of course you see, is of a very delicate and important nature. You must be firm."

"I will endeavour," said Mr. Thumble.

"The bishop and I both feel that this most unfortunate man must not under any circumstances be allowed to perform the services of the Church while this charge is hanging over him,—a charge as to the truth of which no sane man can entertain a doubt."

"I'm afraid not, Mrs. Proudie," said Mr. Thumble.

"The bishop and I, therefore, are most anxious that you should make Mr. Crawley understand at once—at once," and the lady, as she spoke, lifted up her left hand with an eloquent violence which had its effect upon Mr. Thumble, "that he is inhibited,"—the bishop shook in his shoes,—"inhibited from the performance of any of his sacred duties." Thereupon Mr. Thumble promised obedience and went his way.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. CRAWLEY SEEKS FOR SYMPATHY.

Matters went very badly indeed in the parsonage-house at Hogglestock. On the Friday morning, the morning of the day after his committal, Mr. Crawley got up very early, long before the daylight, and dressing himself in the dark, groped his way downstairs. His wife having vainly striven to persuade him to remain where he was, followed him into the cold room below with a lighted candle. She found him standing with his hat on and with his old cloak, as though he were prepared to go out. "Why do you do this?" she said. "You will make yourself ill with the cold and the night air; and then you, and I too, will be worse than we now are."

"We cannot be worse. You cannot be worse, and for me it does not signify. Let me pass."

"I will not let you pass, Josiah. Be a man and bear it. Ask God for strength, instead of seeking it in an over-indulgence of your own sorrow."

"Indulgence!"

"Yes, love;—indulgence. It is indulgence. You will allow your mind to dwell on nothing for a moment but your own wrongs."

"What else have I that I can think of? Is not all the world against me?"

"Am I against you?"

"Sometimes I think you are. When you accuse me of self-indulgence you are against me,—me, who for myself have desired nothing but to be allowed to do my duty, and to have bread enough to keep me alive, and clothes enough to make me decent."

"Is it not self-indulgence, this giving way to grief? Who would know so well as you how to teach the lesson of endurance to others?

Come, love. Lay down your hat. It cannot be fitting that you should go out into the wet and cold of the raw morning."

For a moment he hesitated, but as she raised her hand to take his cloak from him he drew back from her, and would not permit it. "I shall find those up whom I want to see," he said. "I must visit my flock, and I dare not go through the parish by daylight lest they hoot after me as a thief."

"Not one in Hogglestock would say a word to insult you."

"Would they not? The very children in the school whisper at me. Let me pass, I say. It has not as yet come to that, that I should be stopped in my egress and ingress. They have—bailed me; and while their bail lasts, I may go where I will."

"Oh, Josiah what words to me! Have I ever stopped your liberty? Would I not give my life to secure it?"

"Let me go, then, now. I tell you that I have business in hand."

"But I will go with you? I will be ready in an instant."

"You go? Why should you go? Are there not the children for you to mind?"

"There is only Jane."

"Stay with her, then. Why should you go about the parish?" She still held him by the cloak, and looked anxiously up into his face. "Woman," he said, raising his voice, "what is it that you dread? I command you to tell me what is it that you fear?" He had now taken hold of her by the shoulder, slightly thrusting her from him, so that he might see her face by the dim light of the single candle. "Speak, I say. What is it that you think that I shall do?"

"Dearest, I know that you will be better at home, better with me, than you can be on such a morning as this out in the cold damp air."

"And is that all?" He looked hard at her, while she returned his gaze with beseeching, loving eyes. "Is there nothing behind, that you will not tell me?"

She paused for a moment before she replied. She had never lied to him. She could not lie to him. "I wish you knew my heart towards you," she said, "with all and everything in it."

"I know your heart well, but I want to know your mind. Why would you persuade me not to go out among my poor?"

"Because it will be bad for you to be out alone in the dark lanes, in the mud and wet, thinking of your sorrow. You will brood over it till

you lose your senses through the intensity of your grief. You will stand out in the cold air, forgetful of everything around you, till your limbs will be numbed, and your blood chilled,——"

"And then——?"

"Oh, Josiah, do not hold me like that, and look at me so angrily."

"And even then I will bear my burden till the Lord in his mercy shall see fit to relieve me. Even then I will endure, though a bare bodkin or a leaf of hemlock would put an end to it. Let me pass on; you need fear nothing."

She did let him pass without another word, and he went out of the house, shutting the door after him noiselessly, and closing the wicket-gate of the garden. For a while she sat herself down on the nearest chair, and tried to make up her mind how she might best treat him in his present state of mind. As regarded the present morning her heart was at ease. She knew that he would do now nothing of that which she had apprehended. She could trust him not to be false in his word to her, though she could not before have trusted him not to commit so much heavier a sin. If he would really employ himself from morning till night among the poor, he would be better so,—his trouble would be easier of endurance,—than with any other employment which he could adopt. What she most dreaded was that he should sit idle over the fire and do nothing. When he was so seated she could read his mind, as though it was open to her as a book. She had been quite right when she had accused him of over-indulgence in his grief. He did give way to it till it became a luxury to him,—a luxury which she would not have had the heart to deny him had she not felt it to be of all luxuries the most pernicious. During these long hours, in which he would sit speechless, doing nothing, he was telling himself from minute to minute that of all God's creatures he was the most heavily afflicted, and was revelling in the sense of the injustice done to him. He was recalling all the facts of his life, his education, which had been costly, and, as regarded knowledge, successful; his vocation to the Church, when in his youth he had determined to devote himself to the service of his Saviour, disregarding promotion or the favour of men; the short, sweet days of his early love, in which he had devoted himself again,—thinking nothing of self, but everything of her; his diligent working, in which he had ever done his very utmost for the parish in which he was placed, and always his best for the poorest; the success of other

men who had been his compeers, and, as he too often told himself, intellectually his inferiors; then of his children, who had been carried off from his love to the churchyard,—over whose graves he himself had stood, reading out the pathetic words of the funeral service with unswerving voice and a bleeding heart; and then of his children still living, who loved their mother so much better than they loved him. And he would recall all the circumstances of his poverty,—how he had been driven to accept alms, to fly from creditors, to hide himself, to see his chairs and tables seized before the eyes of those over whom he had been set as their spiritual pastor. And in it all, I think, there was nothing so bitter to the man as the derogation from the spiritual grandeur of his position as priest among men, which came as one necessary result from his poverty. St. Paul could go forth without money in his purse, or shoes to his feet, or two suits to his back, and his poverty never stood in the way of his preaching, or hindered the veneration of the faithful. St. Paul, indeed, was called upon to bear stripes, was flung into prison, encountered terrible dangers. But Mr. Crawley,—so he told himself,—could have encountered all that without flinching. The stripes and scorn of the unfaithful would have been nothing to him, if only the faithful would have believed in him, poor as he was, as they would have believed in him had he been rich! Even they whom he had most loved treated him almost with derision, because he was now different from them. Dean Arabin had laughed at him because he had persisted in walking ten miles through the mud instead of being conveyed in the dean's carriage; and yet, after that, he had been driven to accept the dean's charity! No one respected him. No one! His very wife thought that he was a lunatic. And now he had been publicly branded as a thief; and in all likelihood would end his days in a gaol! Such were always his thoughts as he sat idle, silent, moody, over the fire; and his wife well knew their currents. It would certainly be better that he should drive himself to some employment, if any employment could be found possible to him.

When she had been alone for a few minutes, Mrs. Crawley got up from her chair, and going into the kitchen, lighted the fire there, and put the kettle over it, and began to prepare such breakfast for her husband as the means in the house afforded. Then she called the sleeping servant-girl, who was little more than a child, and went into her own girl's room, and then she got into bed with her daughter.

"I have been up with your papa, dear, and I am cold."

"Oh, mamma, poor mamma! Why is papa up so early?"

"He has gone out to visit some of the brickmakers before they go to their work. It is better for him to be employed."

"But, mamma, it is pitch dark!"

"Yes, dear, it is still dark. Sleep again for a while, and I will sleep too. I think Grace will be here to-night, and then there will be no room for me here."

Mr. Crawley went forth and made his way with rapid steps to a portion of his parish nearly two miles distant from his house, through which was carried a canal, affording water communication in some intricate way both to London and Bristol. And on the brink of this canal there had sprung up a colony of brickmakers, the nature of the earth in those parts combining with the canal to make brickmaking a suitable trade. The workmen there assembled were not, for the most part, native-born Hogglestockians, or folk descended from Hogglestockian parents. They had come thither from unknown regions, as labourers of that class do come when they are needed. Some young men from that and neighbouring parishes had joined themselves to the colony, allured by wages, and disregarding the menaces of the neighbouring farmers; but they were all in appearance and manners nearer akin to the race of navvies than to ordinary rural labourers. They had a bad name in the country; but it may be that their name was worse than their deserts. The farmers hated them, and consequently they hated the farmers. They had a beershop, and a grocer's shop, and a huckster's shop for their own accommodation, and were consequently vilified by the small old-established tradesmen around them. They got drunk occasionally, but I doubt whether they drank more than did the farmers themselves on market-day. They fought among themselves sometimes, but they forgave each other freely, and seemed to have no objection to black eyes. I fear that they were not always good to their wives, nor were their wives always good to them; but it should be remembered that among the poor, especially when they live in clusters, such misfortunes cannot be hidden as they may be amidst the decent belongings of more wealthy people. That they worked very hard was certain; and it was certain also that very few of their number ever came upon the poor-rates. What became of the old brickmakers no one knew. Who ever sees a worn-out aged navvie?

Mr. Crawley, ever since his first coming into Hogglestock, had been very busy among these brickmakers, and by no means without success. Indeed the farmers had quarrelled with him because the brickmakers had so crowded the narrow parish church as to leave but scant room for decent people. "Doo they folk pay tithes? That's what I want 'un to tell me," argued one farmer,—not altogether unnaturally, believing as he did that Mr. Crawley was paid by tithes out of his own pocket. But Mr. Crawley had done his best to make the brickmakers welcome at the church, scandalizing the farmers by causing them to sit or stand in any portion of the church which was hitherto unappropriated. He had been constant in his personal visits to them, and had felt himself to be more a St. Paul with them than with any other of his neighbours around him.

It was a cold morning, but the rain of the preceding evening had given way to frost, and the air, though sharp, was dry. The ground under the feet was crisp, having felt the wind and frost, and was no longer clogged with mud. In his present state of mind the walk was good for our poor pastor, and exhilarated him; but still, as he went, he thought always of his injuries. His own wife believed that he was about to commit suicide, and for so believing he was very angry with her; and yet, as he well knew, the idea of making away with himself had flitted through his own mind a dozen times. Not from his own wife could he get real sympathy. He would see what he could do with a certain brickmaker of his acquaintance.

"Are you here, Dan?" he said, knocking at the door of a cottage which stood alone, close to the towing-path of the canal, and close also to a forlorn corner of the muddy, watery, ugly, disordered brickfield. It was now just past six o'clock, and the men would be rising, as in midwinter they commenced their work at seven. The cottage was an unalluring, straight brick-built tenement, seeming as though intended to be one of a row which had never progressed beyond Number One. A voice answered from the interior, inquiring who was the visitor, to which Mr. Crawley replied by giving his name. Then the key was turned in the lock, and Dan Morris, the brickmaker, appeared with a candle in his hand. He had been engaged in lighting the fire, with a view to his own breakfast. "Where is your wife, Dan?" asked Mr. Crawley. The man answered by pointing with a short poker, which he held in his hand, to the bed, which was half screened from the room

by a ragged curtain, which hung from the ceiling half-way down to the floor. "And are the Darvels here?" asked Mr. Crawley. Then Morris, again using the poker, pointed upwards, showing that the Darvels were still in their own allotted abode upstairs.

"You're early out, Muster Crawley," said Morris, and then he went on with his fire. "Drat the sticks, if they bean't as wut as the old 'un hisself. Get up, old woman, and do you do it, for I can't. They wun't kindle for me, nohow." But the old woman, having well noted the presence of Mr. Crawley, thought it better to remain where she was.

Mr. Crawley sat himself down by the obstinate fire, and began to arrange the sticks. "Dan, Dan," said a voice from the bed, "sure you wouldn't let his reverence trouble himself with the fire."

"How be I to keep him from it if he chooses? I didn't ax him." Then Morris stood by and watched, and after a while Mr. Crawley succeeded in his attempt.

"How could it burn when you had not given the small spark a current of air to help it?" said Mr. Crawley.

"In course not," said the woman, "but he be such a stoopid."

The husband said no word in acknowledgment of this compliment, nor did he thank Mr. Crawley for what he had done, nor appear as though he intended to take any notice of him. He was going on with his work when Mr. Crawley again interrupted him.

"How did you get back from Silverbridge yesterday, Dan?"

"Footed it,—all the blessed way."

"It's only eight miles."

"And I footed it there, and that's sixteen. And I paid one-and-sixpence for beer and grub;—s'help me, I did."

"Dan!" said the voice from the bed, rebuking him for the impropriety of his language.

"Well; I beg pardon, but I did. And they guv me two bob;—just two plain shillings, by——"

"Dan!"

"And I'd 've arned three-and-six here at brickmaking, easy; that's what I would. How's a poor man to live that way? They'll not cotch me at Barchester 'Sizes at that price; they may be sure o' that. Look there,—that's what I've got for my day." And he put his hand into his breeches'-pocket and fetched out a sixpence. "How's a man to fill his belly out of that? Damnation!"

"Dan!"

"Well, what did I say? Hold your jaw, will you, and not be halloaing at me that way? I know what I'm a saying of, and what I'm a doing of."

"I wish they'd given you something more with all my heart," said Crawley.

"We knows that," said the woman from the bed. "We is sure of that, your reverence."

"Sixpence!" said the man scornfully. "If they'd have guv' me nothing at all but the run of my teeth at the public-house, I'd 've taken it better. But sixpence!"

Then there was a pause. "And what have they given to me?" said Mr. Crawley, when the man's ill-humour about his sixpence had so far subsided as to allow of his busying himself again about the premises.

"Yes, indeed;—yes, indeed," said the woman. "Yes, yes, we feel that; we do indeed, Mr. Crawley."

"I tell you what, sir; for another sixpence, I'd 've sworn you'd never guv' me the paper at all; and so I will now, if it bean't too late;—sixpence or no sixpence. What do I care? d— them."

"Dan!"

"And why shouldn't I? They hain't got brains enough among them to winny the truth from the lies—not among the lot of 'em. I'll swear afore the judge that you didn't give it me at all, if that'll do any good."

"Man, do you think I would have you perjure yourself, even if that would do me a service? And do you think that any man was ever served by a lie?"

"Faix, among them chaps it don't do to tell them too much of the truth. Look at that!" And he brought out the sixpence again from his breeches'-pocket. "And look at your reverence. Only that they've let you out for a while, they've been nigh as hard on you as though you were one of us."

"If they think that I stole it, they have been right," said Mr. Crawley.

"It's been along of that chap Soames," said the woman. "The lord would 've paid the money out of his own pocket and never said not a word."

"If they think that I've been a thief, they have done right," repeated

Mr. Crawley. "But how can they think so? How can they think so? Have I lived like a thief among them?"

"For the matter o' that, if a man ain't paid for his work by them as is his employers, he must pay hisself. Them's my notions. Look at that!" Whereupon he again pulled out the sixpence, and held it forth in the palm of his hand.

"You believe, then," said Mr. Crawley, speaking very slowly, "that I did steal the money? Speak out, Dan; I shall not be angry. As you go you are honest men, and I want to know what such of you think about it."

"He don't think nothing of the kind," said the woman, almost getting out of bed in her energy. "If he'd athought the like o' that in his head, I'd read 'un such a lesson he'd never think again the longest day he had to live."

"Speak out, Dan," said the clergyman, not attending to the woman. "You can understand that no good can come of a lie." Dan Morris scratched his head. "Speak out, man, when I tell you," said Mr. Crawley.

"Drat it all," said Dan, "where's the use of so much jaw about it?"

"Say you know his reverence is as innocent as the babe as isn't born," said the woman.

"No; I won't,—say nothing of the kind," said Dan.

"Speak out the truth," said Crawley.

"They do say, among 'em," said Dan, "that you picked it up, and then got a woolgathering in your head till you didn't rightly know where it come from." Then he paused. "And after a bit you guv' it me to get the money. Didn't you, now?"

"I did."

"And they do say if a poor man had done it, it'd been stealing, for sartain."

"And I'm a poor man,—the poorest in all Hogglestock; and, therefore, of course, it is stealing. Of course I am a thief. Yes; of course I am a thief. When did not the world believe the worst of the poor?" Having so spoken, Mr. Crawley rose from his chair and hurried out of the cottage, waiting no further reply from Dan Morris or his wife. And as he made his way slowly home, not going there by the direct road, but by a long circuit, he told himself that there could be no sympathy

for him anywhere. Even Dan Morris, the brickmaker, thought that he was a thief.

"And am I a thief?" he said to himself, standing in the middle of the road, with his hands up to his forehead.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BISHOP'S ANGEL.

It was nearly nine before Mr. Crawley got back to his house, and found his wife and daughter waiting breakfast for him. "I should not wonder if Grace were over here to-day," said Mrs. Crawley. "She'd better remain where she is," said he. After this the meal passed almost without a word. When it was over, Jane, at a sign from her mother, went up to her father and asked him whether she should read with him. "Not now," he said, "not just now. I must rest my brain before it will be fit for any work." Then he got into the chair over the fire, and his wife began to fear that he would remain there all the day.

But the morning was not far advanced, when there came a visitor who disturbed him, and by disturbing him did him real service. Just at ten there arrived at the little gate before the house a man on a pony, whom Jane espied, standing there by the pony's head and looking about for some one to relieve him from the charge of his steed. This was Mr. Thumble, who had ridden over to Hogglestock on a poor spavined brute belonging to the bishop's stable and which had once been the bishop's cob. Now it was the vehicle by which Mrs. Proudie's episcopal messages were sent backwards and forwards through a twelve-miles ride round Barchester; and so many were the lady's requirements that the poor animal by no means eat the hay of idleness. Mr. Thumble had suggested to Mrs. Proudie, after their interview with the bishop and the giving up of the letter to the clerical messenger's charge, that

before hiring a gig from the "Dragon of Wantley," he should be glad to know,—looking as he always did to "Mary Anne and the children," —whence the price of the gig was to be returned to him. Mrs. Proudie had frowned at him,—not with all the austerity of frowning which she could use when really angered, but simply with a frown which gave her some little time for thought, and would enable her to continue the rebuke if, after thinking, she should find that rebuke was needed. But mature consideration showed her that Mr. Thumble's caution was not without reason. Were the bishop energetic, or even the bishop's managing chaplain as energetic as he should be, Mr. Crawley might, as Mrs. Proudie felt assured, be made in some way to pay for a conveyance for Mr. Thumble. But the energy was lacking, and the price of the gig, if the gig were ordered, would certainly fall ultimately upon the bishop's shoulders. This was very sad. Mrs. Proudie had often grieved over the necessary expenditure of episcopal surveillance, and had been heard to declare her opinion that a liberal allowance for secret service should be made in every diocese. What better could the Ecclesiastical Commissioners do with all those rich revenues which they had stolen from the bishops! But there was no such liberal allowance at present, and, therefore, Mrs. Proudie, after having frowned at Mr. Thumble for some seconds, desired him to take the grey cob. Now, Mr. Thumble had ridden the grey cob before, and would much have preferred a gig. But even the grey cob was better than a gig at his own cost.

"Mamma, there's a man at the gate wanting to come in," said Jane. "I think he's a clergyman."

Mr. Crawley immediately raised his head, though he did not at once leave his chair. Mrs. Crawley went to the window, and recognized the reverend visitor. "My dear, it is that Mr. Thumble who is so much with the bishop."

"What does Mr. Thumble want with me?"

"Nay, my dear; he will tell you that himself." But Mrs. Crawley, though she answered him with a voice intended to be cheerful, greatly feared the coming of this messenger from the palace. She perceived at once that the bishop was about to interfere with her husband in consequence of that which the magistrates had done yesterday.

"Mamma, he doesn't know what to do with his pony," said Jane.

"Tell him to tie it to the rail," said Mr. Crawley. "If he has expected to find menials here, as he has them at the palace, he will be

wrong. If he wants to come in here, let him tie the beast to the rail." So Jane went out and sent a message to Mr. Thumble by the girl, and Mr. Thumble did tie the pony to the rail, and followed the girl into the house. Jane in the mean time had retired out by the back door to the school, but Mrs. Crawley kept her ground. She kept her ground although she almost believed that her husband would prefer to have the field to himself. As Mr. Thumble did not at once enter the room, Mr. Crawley stalked to the door, and stood with it open in his hand. Though he knew Mr. Thumble's person he was not acquainted with him, and therefore he simply bowed to the visitor,—bowing more than once or twice with a cold courtesy which did not put Mr. Thumble altogether at his ease. "My name is Mr. Thumble," said the visitor,—"The Reverend Caleb Thumble;" and he held the bishop's letter in his hand. Mr. Crawley seemed to take no notice of the letter, but motioned Mr. Thumble with his hand into the room.

"I suppose you have come over from Barchester this morning?" said Mrs. Crawley.

"Yes, madam,—from the palace." Mr. Thumble, though a humble man in positions in which he felt that humility would become him,—a humble man to his betters, as he himself would have expressed it,—had still about him something of that pride which naturally belonged to those clergymen who were closely attached to the palace at Barchester. Had he been sent on a message to Plumstead,—could any such message from Barchester palace have been possible,—he would have been properly humble in his demeanour to the archdeacon, or to Mrs. Grantly had he been admitted to the august presence of that lady; but he was aware that humility would not become him on his present mission; he had been expressly ordered to be firm by Mrs. Proudie, and firm he meant to be; and therefore, in communicating to Mrs. Crawley the fact that he had come from the palace, he did load the tone of his voice with something of dignity which Mr. Crawley might perhaps be excused for regarding as arrogance.

"And what does the 'palace' want with me?" said Mr. Crawley. Mrs. Crawley knew at once that there was to be a battle. Nay, the battle had begun. Nor was she altogether sorry; for though she could not trust her husband to sit alone all day in his arm-chair over the fire, she could trust him to carry on a disputation with any other clergyman on any subject whatever. "What does the palace want

with me?" And as Mr. Crawley asked the question he stood erect, and looked Mr. Thumble full in the face. Mr. Thumble called to mind the fact that Mr. Crawley was a very poor man indeed,—so poor that he owed money all round the country to butchers and bakers,—and the other fact, that he, Mr. Thumble himself, did not owe any money to any one, his wife luckily having a little income of her own; and, strengthened by these remembrances, he endeavoured to bear Mr. Crawley's attack with gallantry.

"Of course, Mr. Crawley, you are aware that this unfortunate affair at Silverbridge——"

"I am not prepared, sir, to discuss the unfortunate affair at Silverbridge with a stranger. If you are the bearer of any message to me from the Bishop of Barchester, perhaps you will deliver it."

"I havebrought a letter," said Mr. Thumble. Then Mr. Crawley stretched out his hand without a word, and taking the letter with him to the window, read it very slowly. When he had made himself master of its contents, he refolded the letter, placed it again in the envelope, and returned to the spot where Mr. Thumble was standing. "I will answer the bishop's letter," he said; "I will answer it of course, as it is fitting that I should do. Shall I ask you to wait for my reply, or shall I send it by course of post?"

"I think, Mr. Crawley, as the bishop wishes me to undertake the duty——"

"You will not undertake the duty, Mr. Thumble. You need not trouble yourself, for I shall not surrender my pulpit to you."

"But the bishop——"

"I care nothing for the bishop in this matter." So much he spoke in anger, and then he corrected himself. "I crave the bishop's pardon, and yours as his messenger, if in the heat occasioned by my strong feelings I have said aught which may savour of irreverence towards his lordship's office. I respect his lordship's high position as bishop of this diocese, and I bow to his commands in all things lawful. But I must not bow to him in things unlawful, nor must I abandon my duty before God at his bidding, unless his bidding be given in accordance with the canons of the Church and the laws of the land. It will be my duty, on the coming Sunday, to lead the prayers of my people in the church of my parish, and to preach to them from my pulpit; and that duty, with God's assistance, I will perform. Nor will I allow any clergyman

to interfere with me in the performance of those sacred offices,—no, not though the bishop himself should be present with the object of enforcing his illegal command." Mr. Crawley spoke these words without hesitation, even with eloquence, standing upright, and with something of a noble anger gleaming over his poor wan face; and I think, that while speaking them, he was happier than he had been for many a long day.

Mr. Thumble listened to him patiently, standing with one foot a little in advance of the other, with one hand folded over the other, with his head rather on one side, and with his eyes fixed on the corner where the wall and ceiling joined each other. He had been told to be firm, and he was considering how he might best display firmness. He thought that he remembered some story of two parsons fighting for one pulpit, and he thought also that he should not himself like to incur the scandal of such a proceeding in the diocese. As to the law in the matter he knew nothing himself; but he presumed that a bishop would probably know the law better than a perpetual curate. That Mrs. Proudie was intemperate and imperious, he was aware. Had the message come from her alone, he might have felt that even for her sake he had better give way. But as the despotic arrogance of the lady had been in this case backed by the timid presence and hesitating words of her lord, Mr. Thumble thought that he must have the law on his side. "I think you will find, Mr. Crawley," said he, "that the bishop's inhibition is strictly legal." He had picked up the powerful word from Mrs. Proudie, and flattered himself that it might be of use to him in carrying his purpose.

"It is illegal," said Mr. Crawley, speaking somewhat louder than before, "and will be absolutely futile. As you pleaded to me that you yourself and your own personal convenience were concerned in this matter, I have made known my intentions to you, which otherwise I should have made known only to the bishop. If you please, we will discuss the subject no further."

"Am I to understand, Mr. Crawley, that you refuse to obey the bishop?"

"The bishop has written to me, sir; and I will make known my intention to the bishop by a written answer. As you have been the bearer of the bishop's letter to me, I am bound to ask you whether I shall be indebted to you for carrying back my reply, or whether I shall

send it by course of post?" Mr. Thumble considered for a moment, and then made up his mind that he had better wait, and carry back the epistle. This was Friday, and the letter could not be delivered by post till the Saturday morning. Mrs. Proudie might be angry with him if he should be the cause of loss of time. He did not, however, at all like waiting, having perceived that Mr. Crawley, though with language cautiously worded, had spoken of him as a mere messenger.

"I think," he said, "that I may, perhaps, best further the object which we must all have in view, that namely of providing properly for the Sunday services of the church of Hogglestock, by taking your reply personally to the bishop."

"That provision is my care, and need trouble no one else," said Mr. Crawley, in a loud voice. Then, before seating himself at his old desk, he stood awhile, pondering, with his back turned to his visitor. "I have to ask your pardon, sir," said he, looking round for a moment, "because, by reason of the extreme poverty of this house, my wife is unable to offer to you that hospitality which is especially due from one clergyman to another."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Mr. Thumble.

"If you will allow me, sir, I would prefer that it should be mentioned." Then he seated himself at his desk, and commenced his letter.

Mr. Thumble felt himself to be awkwardly placed. Had there been no third person in the room he could have sat down in Mr. Crawley's arm-chair, and waited patiently till the letter should be finished. But Mrs. Crawley was there, and of course he was bound to speak to her. In what strain could he do so? Even he, little as he was given to indulge in sentiment, had been touched by the man's appeal to his own poverty, and he felt, moreover, that Mrs. Crawley must have been deeply moved by her husband's position with reference to the bishop's order. It was quite out of the question that he should speak of that, as Mr. Crawley would, he was well aware, immediately turn upon him. At last he thought of a subject, and spoke with a voice intended to be pleasant.

"That was the school-house I passed, probably, just as I came here?" Mrs. Crawley told him that it was the school-house. "Ah, yes, I thought so. Have you a certified teacher here?" Mrs. Crawley

explained that no Government aid had ever reached Hogglestock. Besides themselves, they had only a young woman whom they themselves had instructed. "Ah, that is a pity," said Mr. Thumble.

"I,—I am the certified teacher," said Mr. Crawley, turning round upon him from his chair.

"Oh, ah, yes," said Mr. Thumble; and after that Mr. Thumble asked no more questions about the Hogglestock school. Soon afterwards Mrs. Crawley left the room, seeing the difficulty under which Mr. Thumble was labouring and feeling sure that her presence would not now be necessary. Mr. Crawley's letter was written quickly, though every now and then he would sit for a moment with his pen poised in the air, searching his memory for a word. But the words came to him easily, and before an hour was over he had handed his letter to Mr. Thumble. The letter was as follows:

"The Parsonage, Hogglestock, Dec. 186—.

"RIGHT REVEREND LORD,

"I HAVE received the letter of yesterday's date which your lordship has done me the honour of sending to me by the hands of the Reverend Mr. Thumble, and I avail myself of that gentleman's kindness to return to you an answer by the same means, moved thus to use his patience chiefly by the consideration that in this way my reply to your lordship's injunctions may be in your hands with less delay than would attend the regular course of the mail-post.

"It is with deep regret that I feel myself constrained to inform your lordship that I cannot obey the command which you have laid upon me with reference to the services of my church in this parish. I cannot permit Mr. Thumble, or any other delegate from your lordship, to usurp my place in my pulpit. I would not have you to think, if I can possibly dispel such thoughts from your mind, that I disregard your high office, or that I am deficient in that respectful obedience to the bishop set over me which is due to the authority of the Crown as the head of the Church in these realms; but in this, as in all questions of obedience, he who is required to obey must examine the extent of the authority exercised by him who demands obedience. Your lordship might possibly call upon me, using your voice as bishop of the diocese, to abandon altogether the freehold rights which are now mine in this

perpetual curacy. The judge of assize, before whom I shall soon stand for my trial, might command me to retire to prison without a verdict given by the jury. The magistrates who committed me so lately as yesterday, upon whose decision in that respect your lordship has taken action against me so quickly, might have equally strained their authority. But in no case, in this land, is he that is subject bound to obey, further than where the law gives authority and exacts obedience. It is not in the power of the Crown itself to inhibit me from the performance of my ordinary duties in this parish by any such missive as that sent to me by your lordship. If your lordship think it right to stop my mouth as a clergyman in your diocese, you must proceed to do so in an ecclesiastical court in accordance with the laws, and will succeed in your object, or fail, in accordance with the evidences as to ministerial fitness or unfitness, which may be produced respecting me before the proper tribunal.

"I will allow that much attention is due from a clergyman to pastoral advice given to him by his bishop. On that head I must first express to your lordship my full understanding that your letter has not been intended to convey advice, but an order;—an inhibition, as your messenger, the Reverend Mr. Thumble, has expressed it. There might be a case certainly in which I should submit myself to counsel, though I should resist command. No counsel, however, has been given,—except indeed that I should receive your messenger in a proper spirit, which I hope I have done. No other advice has been given me, and therefore there is now no such case as that I have imagined. But in this matter, my lord, I could not have accepted advice from living man, no, not though the hands of the apostles themselves had made him bishop who tendered it to me, and had set him over me for my guidance. I am in a terrible strait. Trouble, and sorrow, and danger are upon me and mine. It may well be, as your lordship says, that the bitter waters of the present hour may pass over my head and destroy me. I thank your lordship for telling me whither I am to look for assistance. Truly I know not whether there is any to be found for me on earth. But the deeper my troubles, the greater my sorrow, the more pressing my danger, the stronger is my need that I should carry myself in these days with that outward respect of self which will teach those around me to know that, let who will condemn me, I have not condemned myself Were I to abandon my pulpit, unless forced to do so by legal

means, I should in doing so be putting a plea of guilty against myself upon the record. This, my lord, I will not do.

"I have the honour to be, my lord,

"Your lordship's most obedient servant,

"JOSIAH CRAWLEY."

When he had finished writing his letter he read it over slowly, and then handed it to Mr. Thumble. The act of writing, and the current of the thoughts through his brain, and the feeling that in every word written he was getting the better of the bishop,—all this joined to a certain manly delight in warfare against authority, lighted up the man's face and gave to his eyes an expression which had been long wanting to them. His wife at that moment came into the room, and he looked at her with an air of triumph as he handed the letter to Mr. Thumble. "If you will give that to his lordship with an assurance of my duty to his lordship in all things proper, I will thank you kindly, craving your pardon for the great delay to which you have been subjected."

"As to the delay, that is nothing," said Mr. Thumble.

"It has been much; but you as a clergyman will feel that it has been incumbent on me to speak my mind fully."

"Oh, yes; of course." Mr. Crawley was standing up, as also was Mrs. Crawley. It was evident to Mr. Thumble that they both expected that he should go. But he had been specially enjoined to be firm, and he doubted whether hitherto he had been firm enough. As far as this morning's work had as yet gone, it seemed to him that Mr. Crawley had had the play all to himself, and that he, Mr. Thumble, had not had his innings. He, from the palace, had been, as it were, cowed by this man who had been forced to plead his own poverty. It was certainly incumbent upon him, before he went, to speak up, not only for the bishop, but for himself also. "Mr. Crawley," he said, "hitherto I have listened to you patiently."

"Nay," said Mr. Crawley, smiling, "you have indeed been patient, and I thank you; but my words have been written, not spoken."

"You have told me that you intend to disobey the bishop's inhibition."

"I have told the bishop so certainly."

"May I ask you now to listen to me for a few minutes?"

Mr. Crawley, still smiling, still having in his eyes the unwonted

triumph which had lighted them up, paused a moment, and then answered him. "Reverend sir, you must excuse me if I say no,—not on this subject."

"You will not let me speak?"

"No; not on this matter, which is very private to me. What should you think if I went into your house and inquired of you as to those things which were particularly near to you?"

"But the bishop sent me."

"Though ten bishops had sent me,—a council of archbishops if you will!" Mr. Thumble started back, appalled at the energy of the words used to him. "Shall a man have nothing of his own;—no sorrow in his heart, no care in his family, no thought in his breast so private and special to him, but that, if he happen to be a clergyman, the bishop may touch it with his thumb?"

"I am not the bishop's thumb," said Mr. Thumble, drawing himself up.

"I intended not to hint anything personally objectionable to yourself. I will regard you as one of the angels of the Church." Mr. Thumble, when he heard this, began to be sure that Mr. Crawley was mad; he knew of no angels that could ride about the Barsetshire lanes on grey ponies. "And as such I will respect you; but I cannot discuss with you the matter of the bishop's message."

"Oh, very well. I will tell his lordship."

"I will pray you to do so."

"And his lordship, should he so decide, will arm me with such power on my next coming as will enable me to carry out his lordship's wishes."

"His lordship will abide by the law,—as will you also." In speaking these last words he stood with the door in his hand, and Mr. Thumble, not knowing how to increase or even to maintain his firmness, thought it best to pass out, and mount his grey pony and ride away.

"The poor man thought that you were laughing at him when you called him an angel of the Church," said Mrs. Crawley, coming up to him and smiling on him.

"Had I told him he was simply a messenger, he would have taken it worse! Poor fool! When they have rid themselves of me they may put him here, in my church; but not yet,—not yet. Where is Jane? Tell her that I am ready to commence the Seven against Thebes

with her." Then Jane was immediately sent for out of the school, and the Seven against Thebes was commenced with great energy. Often during the next hour and a half Mrs. Crawley from the kitchen would hear him reading out, or rather saying by rote, with sonorous, rolling voice, great passages from some chorus, and she was very thankful to the bishop who had sent over to them a message and a messenger which had been so salutary in their effect upon her husband. "In truth an angel of the Church," she said to herself as she chopped up the onions for the mutton broth; and ever afterwards she regarded Mr. Thumble as an "angel."

CHAPTER XIV.

MAJOR GRANTLY CONSULTS A FRIEND.

GRACE CRAWLEY passed through Silverbridge on her way to Allington on the Monday, and on the Tuesday morning Major Grantly received a very short note from Miss Prettyman, telling him that she had done so. "Dear Sir,—I think you will be glad to learn that our friend Miss Crawley went from us yesterday on a visit to her friend, Miss Dale, at Allington.—Yours truly, Annabella Prettyman." The note said no more than that. Major Grantly was glad to get it, obtaining from it that satisfaction which a man always feels when he is presumed to be concerned in the affairs of a lady with whom he is in love. And he regarded Miss Prettyman with favourable eyes,—as a discreet and friendly woman. Nevertheless, he was not altogether happy. The very fact that Miss Prettyman should write to him on such a subject made him feel that he was bound to Grace Crawley. He knew enough of himself to be sure that he could not give her up without making himself miserable. And yet, as regarded her father, things were going from bad to worse. Everybody now said that the evidence was so strong

against Mr. Crawley as to leave hardly a doubt of his guilt. Even the ladies in Silverbridge were beginning to give up his cause, acknowledging that the money could not have come rightfully into his hands, and excusing him on the plea of partial insanity. "He has picked it up and put it by for months, and then thought that it was his own." The ladies of Silverbridge could find nothing better to say for him than that; and when young Mr. Walker remarked that such little mistakes were the customary causes of men being taken to prison, the ladies of Silverbridge did not know how to answer him. It had come to be their opinion that Mr. Crawley was affected with a partial lunacy, which ought to be forgiven in one to whom the world had been so cruel; and when young Mr. Walker endeavoured to explain to them that a man must be sane altogether or mad altogether, and that Mr. Crawley must, if sane, be locked up as a thief, and if mad, locked up as a madman, they sighed, and were convinced that until the world should have been improved by a new infusion of romance and a stronger feeling of poetic justice, Mr. John Walker was right.

And the result of this general opinion made its way out to Major Grantly, and made its way, also, to the archdeacon at Plumstead. As to the major, in giving him his due, it must be explained that the more certain he became of the father's guilt, the more certain also he became of the daughter's merits. It was very hard. The whole thing was cruelly hard. It was cruelly hard upon him that he should be brought into this trouble and be forced to take upon himself the armour of a knight-errant for the redress of the wrong on the part of the young lady. But when alone in his house, or with his child, he declared to himself that he would do so. It might well be that he could not live in Barsetshire after he had married Mr. Crawley's daughter. He had inherited from his father enough of that longing for ascendancy among those around him to make him feel that in such circumstances he would be wretched. But he would be made more wretched by the self-knowledge that he had behaved badly to the girl he loved; and the world beyond Barsetshire was open to him. He would take her with him to Canada, to New Zealand, or to some other far-away country, and there begin his life again. Should his father choose to punish him for so doing by disinheriting him, they would be poor enough; but in his present frame of mind, the major was able to regard such poverty as honourable and not altogether disagreeable.

He had been out shooting all day at Chaldicotes, with Dr. Thorne and a party who were staying in the house there, and had been talking about Mr. Crawley, first with one man and then with another. Lord Lufton had been there, and young Gresham from Greshambury, and Mr. Robarts the clergyman, and news had come among them of the attempt made by the bishop to stop Mr. Crawley from preaching. Mr. Robarts had been of opinion that Mr. Crawley should have given way; and Lord Lufton, who shared his mother's intense dislike of everything that came from the palace, had sworn that he was right to resist. The sympathy of the whole party had been with Mr. Crawley;—but they had all agreed that he had stolen the money.

"I fear he'll have to give way to the bishop at last," Lord Lufton had said.

"And what on earth will become of his children?" said the doctor. "Think of the fate of that pretty girl; for she is a very pretty girl. It will be ruin to her. No man will allow himself to fall in love with her when her father shall have been found guilty of stealing a cheque for twenty pounds."

"We must do something for the whole family," said the lord. "I say, Thorne, you haven't half the game here that there used to be in poor old Sowerby's time."

"Haven't I?" said the doctor. "You see Sowerby had been at it all his days, and never did anything else. I only began late in life."

The major had intended to stay and dine at Chaldicotes, but when he heard what was said about Grace, his heart became sad, and he made some excuse as to his child, and returned home. Dr. Thorne had declared that no man could allow himself to fall in love with her. But what if a man had fallen in love with her beforehand? What if a man had not only fallen in love, but spoken of his love? Had he been alone with the doctor, he would, I think, have told him the whole of his trouble; for in all the county there was no man whom he would sooner have trusted with his secret. This Dr. Thorne was known far and wide for his soft heart, his open hand, and his well-sustained indifference to the world's opinions on most of those social matters with which the world meddles; and therefore the words which he had spoken had more weight with Major Grantly than they would have had from other lips. As he drove home he almost made up his mind that he would consult Dr. Thorne upon the matter. There were many younger men

with whom he was very intimate,—Frank Gresham, for instance, and Lord Lufton himself; but this was an affair which he hardly knew how to discuss with a young man. To Dr. Thorne he thought that he could bring himself to tell the whole story.

In the evening there came to him a messenger from Plumstead, with a letter from his father and some present for the child. He knew at once that the present had been thus sent as an excuse for the letter. His father might have written by the post, of course; but that would have given to his letter a certain air and tone which he had not wished it to bear. After some message from the major's mother, and some allusion to Edith, the archdeacon struck off upon the matter that was near his heart.

"I fear it is all up with that unfortunate man at Hogglestock," he said. "From what I hear of the evidence which came out before the magistrates, there can, I think, be no doubt as to his guilt. Have you heard that the bishop sent over on the following day to stop him from preaching? He did so, and sent again on the Sunday. But Crawley would not give way, and so far I respect the man; for as a matter of course, whatever the bishop did, or attempted to do, he would do with an extreme of bad taste, probably with gross ignorance as to his own duty and as to the duty of the man under him. I am told that on the first day Crawley turned out of his house the messenger sent to him,—some stray clergyman whom Mrs. Proudie keeps about the house; and that on the Sunday the stairs to the reading-desk and pulpit were occupied by a lot of brickmakers, among whom the parson from Barchester did not venture to attempt to make his way, although he was fortified by the presence of one of the cathedral vergers and by one of the palace footmen. I can hardly believe about the verger and the footman. As for the rest, I have no doubt it is all true. I pity Crawley from my heart. Poor, unfortunate man! The general opinion seems to be that he is not in truth responsible for what he has done. As for his victory over the bishop, nothing on earth could be better.

"Your mother particularly wishes you to come over to us before the end of the week, and to bring Edith. Your grandfather will be here, and he is becoming so infirm that he will never come to us for another Christmas. Of course you will stay over the new year."

Though the letter was full of Mr. Crawley and his affairs there was not a word in it about Grace. This, however, was quite natural. Major

Grantly perfectly well understood his father's anxiety to carry his point without seeming to allude to the disagreeable subject. "My father is very clever," he said to himself, "very clever. But he isn't so clever but one can see how clever he is."

On the next day he went into Silverbridge, intending to call on Miss Prettyman. He had not quite made up his mind what he would say to Miss Prettyman; nor was he called upon to do so, as he never got as far as that lady's house. While walking up the High Street he saw Mrs. Thorne in her carriage, and, as a matter of course, he stopped to speak to her. He knew Mrs. Thorne quite as intimately as he did her husband, and liked her quite as well. "Major Grantly," she said, speaking out loud to him, half across the street; "I was very angry with you yesterday. Why did you not come up to dinner? We had a room ready for you and everything."

"I was not quite well, Mrs. Thorne."

"Fiddlestick. Don't tell me of not being well. There was Emily breaking her heart about you."

"I'm sure Miss Dunstable——"

"To tell you the truth, I think she'll get over it. It won't be mortal with her. But do tell me, Major Grantly, what are we to think about this poor Mr. Crawley? It was so good of you to be one of his bailsmen."

"He would have found twenty in Silverbridge, if he had wanted them."

"And do you hear that he has defied the bishop? I do so like him for that. Not but what poor Mrs. Proudie is the dearest friend I have in the world, and I'm always fighting a battle with old Lady Lufton on her behalf. But one likes to see one's friends worsted sometimes, you know."

"I don't quite understand what did happen at Hogglestock on Sunday," said the major.

"Some say he had the bishop's chaplain put under the pump. I don't believe that; but there is no doubt that when the poor fellow tried to get into the pulpit, they took him and carried him neck and heels out of the church. But, tell me, Major Grantly, what is to become of the family?"

"Heaven knows!"

"Is it not sad? And that eldest girl is so nice! They tell me that

she is perfect,—not only in beauty, but in manners and accomplishments. Everybody says that she talks Greek just as well as she does English, and that she understands philosophy from the top to the bottom."

"At any rate, she is so good and so lovely that one cannot but pity her now," said the major.

"You know her, then, Major Grantly? By-the-by, of course you do, as you were staying with her at Framley."

"Yes, I know her."

"What is to become of her? I'm going your way. You might as well get into the carriage, and I'll drive you home. If he is sent to prison,—and they say he must be sent to prison,—what is to become of them?" Then Major Grantly did get into the carriage, and, before he got out again, he had told Mrs. Thorne the whole story of his love.

She listened to him with the closest attention; only interrupting him now and then with little words, intended to signify her approval. He, as he told his tale, did not look her in the face, but sat with his eyes fixed upon her muff. "And now," he said, glancing up at her almost for the first time as he finished his speech, "and now, Mrs. Thorne, what am I to do?"

"Marry her, of course," said she, raising her hand aloft and bringing it down heavily upon his knee as she gave her decisive reply.

"H—sh—h," he exclaimed, looking back in dismay towards the servants.

"Oh, they never hear anything up there. They're thinking about the last pot of porter they had, or the next they're to get. Deary me, I am so glad! Of course you'll marry her."

"You forget my father."

"No, I don't. What has a father to do with it? You're old enough to please yourself without asking any father. Besides, Lord bless me, the archdeacon isn't the man to bear malice. He'll storm and threaten and stop the supplies for a month or so. Then he'll double them, and take your wife to his bosom, and kiss her and bless her, and all that kind of thing. We all know what parental wrath means in such cases as that."

"But my sister——"

"As for your sister, don't talk to me about her. I don't care two straws about your sister. You must excuse me, Major Grantly, but Lady Hartletop is really too big for my powers of vision."

"And Edith,—of course, Mrs. Thorne, I can't be blind to the fact that in many ways such a marriage would be injurious to her. No man wishes to be connected with a convicted thief."

"No, Major Grantly; but a man does wish to marry the girl that he loves. At least, I suppose so. And what man ever was able to give a more touching proof of his affection than you can do now? If I were you, I'd be at Allington before twelve o'clock to-morrow,—I would indeed. What does it matter about the trumpery cheque? Everybody knows it was a mistake, if he did take it. And surely you would not punish her for that."

"No,—no; but I don't suppose she'd think it a punishment."

"You go and ask her, then. And I'll tell you what. If she hasn't a house of her own to be married from, she shall be married from Chaldicotes. We'll have such a breakfast! And I'll make as much of her as if she were the daughter of my old friend the bishop himself;—I will indeed."

This was Mrs. Thorne's advice. Before it was completed, Major Grantly had been carried half-way to Chaldicotes. When he left his impetuous friend he was too prudent to make any promise, but he declared that what she had said should have much weight with him.

"You won't mention it to anybody?" said the major.

"Certainly not, without your leave," said Mrs. Thorne. "Don't you know that I'm the soul of honour?"

CHAPTER XV.

UP IN LONDON.

SOME kind and attentive reader may perhaps remember that Miss Grace Crawley, in a letter written by her to her friend Miss Lily Dale, said a word or two of a certain John. "If it can only be as John wishes it!" And the same reader, if there be one so kind and attentive,

may also remember that Miss Lily Dale had declared, in reply, that "about that other subject she would rather say nothing,"—and then she had added, "When one thinks of going beyond friendship,—if one tries to do so,—there are so many barriers!" From which words the kind and attentive reader, if such reader be in such matters intelligent as well as kind and attentive, may have learned a great deal with reference to Miss Lily Dale.

We will now pay a visit to the John in question,—a certain Mr. John Eames, living in London, a bachelor, as the intelligent reader will certainly have discovered, and cousin to Miss Grace Crawley. Mr. John Eames at the time of our story was a young man, some seven or eight and twenty years of age, living in London, where he was supposed by his friends in the country to have made his mark, and to be something a little out of the common way. But I do not know that he was very much out of the common way, except in the fact that he had had some few thousand pounds left him by an old nobleman, who had been in no way related to him; but who had regarded him with great affection, and who had died some two years since. Before this, John Eames had not been a very poor man, as he filled the comfortable official position of private secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Income-tax Board, and drew a salary of three hundred and fifty pounds a year from the resources of his country; but when, in addition to this source of official wealth, he became known as the undoubted possessor of a hundred and twenty-eight shares in one of the most prosperous joint-stock banks in the metropolis, which property had been left to him free of legacy duty by the lamented nobleman above named, then Mr. John Eames rose very high indeed as a young man in the estimation of those who knew him, and was supposed to be something a good deal out of the common way. His mother, who lived in the country, was obedient to his slightest word, never venturing to impose upon him any sign of parental authority; and to his sister, Mary Eames, who lived with her mother, he was almost a god upon earth. To sisters who have nothing of their own,—not even some special god for their own individual worship,—generous, affectionate, unmarried brothers, with sufficient incomes, are gods upon earth.

And even up in London Mr. John Eames was somebody. He was so especially at his office; although, indeed, it was remembered by many a man how raw a lad he had been when he first came there, not so very

many years ago; and how they had laughed at him and played him tricks; and how he had customarily been known to be without a shilling for the last week before pay-day, during which period he would borrow sixpence here and a shilling there with great energy, from men who now felt themselves to be honoured when he smiled upon them. Little stories of his former days would often be told of him behind his back; but they were not told with ill-nature, because he was very constant in referring to the same matters himself. And it was acknowledged by every one at the office, that neither the friendship of the nobleman, nor the fact of the private secretaryship, nor the acquisition of his wealth, had made him proud to his old companions or forgetful of old friendships. To the young men, lads who had lately been appointed, he was perhaps a little cold; but then it was only reasonable to conceive that such a one as Mr. John Eames was now could not be expected to make an intimate acquaintance with every new clerk that might be brought into the office. Since competitive examinations had come into vogue there was no knowing who might be introduced; and it was understood generally through the establishment,—and I may almost say by the civil service at large, so wide was his fame,—that Mr. Eames was very averse to the whole theory of competition. The "Devil take the hindmost" scheme, he called it; and would then go on to explain that hindmost candidates were often the best gentlemen, and that, in this way, the Devil got the pick of the flock. And he was respected the more for this opinion, because it was known that on this subject he had fought some hard battles with the chief commissioner. The chief commissioner was a great believer in competition, wrote papers about it, which he read aloud to various bodies of the civil service,—not at all to their delight,—which he got to be printed here and there, and which he sent by post all over the kingdom. More than once this chief commissioner had told his private secretary that they must part company unless the private secretary could see fit to alter his view, or could, at least, keep his views to himself. But the private secretary would do neither; and, nevertheless, there he was, still private secretary. "It's because Johnny has got money," said one of the young clerks, who was discussing this singular state of things with his brethren at the office. "When a chap has got money, he may do what he likes. Johnny has got lots of money, you know." The young clerk in question was by no means on intimate terms with Mr. Eames, but there had

grown up in the office a way of calling him Johnny behind his back, which had probably come down from the early days of his scrapes, and his poverty.

Now the entire life of Mr. John Eames was pervaded by a great secret; and although he never, in those days, alluded to the subject in conversation with any man belonging to the office, yet the secret was known to them all. It had been historical for the last four or five years, and was now regarded as a thing of course. Mr. John Eames was in love, and his love was not happy. He was in love, and had long been in love, and the lady of his love was not kind to him. The little history had grown to be very touching and pathetic, having received, no doubt, some embellishments from the imaginations of the gentlemen of the Income-tax Office. It was said of him that he had been in love from his early boyhood, that at sixteen he had been engaged, under the sanction of the nobleman now deceased and of the young lady's parents, that contracts of betrothals had been drawn up, and things done very unusual in private families in these days, and that then there had come a stranger into the neighbourhood just as the young lady was beginning to reflect whether she had a heart of her own or not, and that she had thrown her parents, and the noble lord, and the contract, and poor Johnny Eames to the winds, and had——. Here the story took different directions as told by different men. Some said the lady had gone off with the stranger, and that there had been a clandestine marriage, which afterwards turned out to be no marriage at all; others, that the stranger suddenly took himself off, and was no more seen by the young lady; others, that he owned at last to having another wife,—and so on. The stranger was very well known to be one Mr. Crosbie, belonging to another public office; and there were circumstances in his life, only half known, which gave rise to these various rumours. But there was one thing certain, one point as to which no clerk in the Income-tax Office had a doubt, one fact which had conduced much to the high position which Mr. John Eames now held in the estimation of his brother clerks, —he had given this Mr. Crosbie such a thrashing that no man had ever received such treatment before and had lived through it. Wonderful stories were told about that thrashing, so that it was believed, even by the least enthusiastic in such matters, that the poor victim had only dragged on a crippled existence since the encounter. "For nine weeks he never said a word

nor eat a mouthful," said one young clerk to a younger clerk who was just entering the office; "and even now he can't speak above a whisper, and has to take all his food in pap." It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. John Eames had about him much of the heroic.

That he was still in love, and in love with the same lady, was known to every one in the office. When it was declared of him that in the way of amatory expressions he had never in his life opened his mouth to another woman, there were those in the office who knew that this was an exaggeration. Mr. Cradell, for instance, who in his early years had been very intimate with John Eames, and who still kept up the old friendship,—although, being a domestic man, with a wife and six young children, and living on a small income, he did not go much out among his friends,—could have told a very different story; for Mrs. Cradell herself had, in days before Cradell had made good his claim upon her, been not unadmired by Cradell's fellow-clerk. But the constancy of Mr. Eames's present love was doubted by none who knew him. It was not that he went about with his stockings ungartered, or any of the old acknowledged signs of unrequited affection. In his manner he was rather jovial than otherwise, and seemed to live a happy, somewhat luxurious life, well contented with himself and the world around him. But still he had this passion within his bosom, and I am inclined to think that he was a little proud of his own constancy.

It might be presumed that when Miss Dale wrote to her friend Grace Crawley about going beyond friendship, pleading that there were so many "barriers," she had probably seen her way over most of them. But this was not so; nor did John Eames himself at all believe that the barriers were in a way to be overcome. I will not say that he had given the whole thing up as a bad job, because it was the law of his life that the thing never should be abandoned as long as hope was possible. Unless Miss Dale should become the wife of somebody else, he would always regard himself as affianced to her. He had so declared to Miss Dale herself and to Miss Dale's mother and to all the Dale people who had ever been interested in the matter. And there was an old lady living in Miss Dale's neighbourhood, the sister of the lord who had left Johnny Eames the bank shares, who always fought his battles for him, and kept a close look-out, fully resolved that John Eames should be rewarded at last. This old lady was connected with the Dales by family ties, and therefore had means of close observation.

She was in constant correspondence with John Eames, and never failed to acquaint him when any of the barriers were, in her judgment, giving way. The nature of some of the barriers may possibly be made intelligible to my readers by the following letter from Lady Julia De Guest to her young friend.

"Guestwick Cottage, —— December, 186—.

"My dear John,—I am much obliged to you for going to Jones's. I send stamps for two shillings and fourpence, which is what I owe you. It used only to be two shillings and twopence, but they say everything has got to be dearer now, and I suppose pills as well as other things. Only think of Pritchard coming to me, and saying she wanted her wages raised, after living with me for twenty years! I was *very* angry, and scolded her roundly; but as she acknowledged she had been wrong, and cried and begged my pardon, I did give her two guineas a year more.

"I saw dear Lily just for a moment on Sunday, and upon my word I think she grows prettier every year. She had a young friend with her,—a Miss Crawley,—who, I believe, is the cousin I have heard you speak of. What is this sad story about her father, the clergyman? Mind you tell me all about it.

"It is quite true what I told you about the De Courcys. Old Lady De Courcy is in London, and Mr. Crosbie is going to law with her about his wife's money. He has been at it in one way or the other ever since poor Lady Alexandrina died. I wish she had lived, with all my heart. For though I feel sure that our Lily will never willingly see him again, yet the tidings of her death disturbed her, and set her thinking of things that were fading from her mind. I rated her soundly, not mentioning your name, however; but she only kissed me, and told me in her quiet drolling way that I didn't mean a word of what I said.

"You can come here whenever you please after the tenth of January. But if you come early in January you must go to your mother first, and come to me for the last week of your holiday. Go to Blackie's in Regent Street, and bring me down all the colours in wool that I ordered. I said you would call. And tell them at Dolland's the last spectacles don't suit at all, and I won't keep them. They had better send me down, by you, one or two more pairs to try. And you had

better see Smithers and Smith, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, No. 57—but you have been there before,—and beg them to let me know how my poor dear brother's matters are to be settled at last. As far as I can see I shall be dead before I shall know what income I have got to spend. As to my cousins at the manor, I never see them; and as to talking to them about business, I should not dream of it. She hasn't come to me since she first called, and she may be *quite sure* I shan't go to her till she does. Indeed I think we shall like each other apart quite as much as we should together. So let me know when you're coming, and *pray* don't forget to call at Blackie's; nor yet at Dolland's, which is much more important than the wool because of my eyes getting so weak. But what I want you specially to remember is about Smithers and Smith. How is a woman to live if she doesn't know how much she has got to spend?

"Believe me to be, my dear John,

"Your most sincere friend,

"JULIA DE GUEST."

Lady Julia always directed her letters for her young friend to his office, and there he received the one now given to the reader. When he had read it he made a memorandum as to the commissions, and then threw himself back in his arm-chair to think over the tidings communicated to him. All the facts stated he had known before: that Lady De Courcy was in London, and that her son-in-law, Mr. Crosbie, whose wife,—Lady Alexandrina,—had died some twelve months since at Baden Baden, was at variance with her respecting money which he supposed to be due to him. But there was that in Lady Julia's letter which was wormwood to him. Lily Dale was again thinking of this man, whom she had loved in old days, and who had treated her with monstrous perfidy! It was all very well for Lady Julia to be sure that Lily Dale would never desire to see Mr. Crosbie again; but John Eames was by no means equally certain that it would be so. "The tidings of her death disturbed her!" said Johnny, repeating to himself certain words out of the old lady's letter. "I know they disturbed me. I wish she could have lived for ever. If he ever ventures to show himself within ten miles of Allington, I'll see if I cannot do better than I did the last time I met him!" Then there came a knock at the door, and the private secretary, finding himself to be somewhat annoyed by

the disturbance at such a moment, bade the intruder enter in angry voice. "Oh, it's you, Cradell, is it? What can I do for you?" Mr. Cradell, who now entered, and who, as before said, was an old ally of John Eames, was a clerk of longer standing in the department than his friend. In age he looked to be much older, and there remained with him none of that appearance of the gloss of youth which will stick for many years to men who are fortunate in their worldly affairs. Indeed it may be said that Mr. Cradell was almost shabby in his outward appearance, and his brow seemed to be laden with care, and his eyes were dull and heavy.

"I thought I'd just come in and ask you how you are," said Cradell.

"I'm pretty well, thank you; and how are you?"

"Oh, I'm pretty well,—in health, that is. You see one has so many things to think of when one has a large family. Upon my word, Johnny, I think you've been lucky to keep out of it."

"I have kept out of it, at any rate; haven't I?"

"Of course; living with you as much as I used to do, I know the whole story of what has kept you single."

"Don't mind about that, Cradell. What is it you want?"

"I mustn't let you suppose, Johnny, that I'm grumbling about my lot. Nobody knows better than you what a trump I got in my wife."

"Of course you did;—an excellent woman."

"And if I cut you out a little there, I'm sure you never felt malice against me for that."

"Never for a moment, old fellow."

"We have all our own luck, you know."

"Your luck has been a wife and family. My luck has been to be a bachelor."

"You may say a family," said Cradell. "I'm sure that Amelia does the best she can; but we are desperately pushed sometimes,—desperately pushed. I never was so bad, Johnny, as I am now."

"So you said the last time."

"Did I? I don't remember it. I didn't think I was so bad then. But, Johnny, if you can let me have one more fiver now I have made arrangements with Amelia how I'm to pay you off by thirty shillings a month,—as I get my salary. Indeed I have. Ask her else."

"I'll be shot if I do."

"Don't say that, Johnny."

"It's no good your Johnnying me, for I won't be Johnnyed out of another shilling. It comes too often, and there's no reason why I should do it. And what's more, I can't afford it. I've people of my own to help."

"But oh, Johnny, we all know how comfortable you are. And I'm sure no one rejoiced as I did when the money was left to you. If it had been myself I could hardly have thought more of it. Upon my solemn word and honour if you'll let me have it this time, it shall be the last."

"Upon my word and honour then, I won't. There must be an end to everything."

Although Mr. Cradell would probably, if pressed, have admitted the truth of this last assertion, he did not seem to think that the end had as yet come to his friend's benevolence. It certainly had not come to his own importunity. "Don't say that, Johnny; pray don't."

"But I do say it."

"When I told Amelia yesterday evening that I didn't like to go to you again, because of course a man has feelings, she told me to mention her name. 'I'm sure he'd do it for my sake,' she said."

"I don't believe she said anything of the kind."

"Upon my word she did. You ask her."

"And if she did, she oughtn't to have said it."

"Oh, Johnny, don't speak in that way of her. She's my wife, and you know what your own feelings were once. But look here,—we are in that state at home at this moment, that I must get money somewhere before I go home. I must, indeed. If you'll let me have three pounds this once, I'll never ask you again. I'll give you a written promise if you like, and I'll pledge myself to pay it back by thirty shillings a time out of the two next months' salary. I will, indeed." And then Mr. Cradell began to cry. But when Johnny at last took out his cheque-book and wrote a cheque for three pounds, Mr. Cradell's eyes glistened with joy. "Upon my word I am so much obliged to you! You are the best fellow that ever lived. And Amelia will say the same when she hears of it."

"I don't believe she'll say anything of the kind, Cradell. If I remember anything of her, she has a stouter heart than that." Cradell

admitted that his wife had a stouter heart than himself, and then made his way back to his own part of the office.

This little interruption to the current of Mr. Eames's thoughts was, I think, for the good of the service, as, immediately on his friend's departure, he went to his work; whereas, had not he been thus called away from his reflections about Miss Dale, he would have sat thinking about her affairs probably for the rest of the morning. As it was, he really did write a dozen notes in answer to as many private letters addressed to his chief, Sir Raffle Buffle, in all of which he made excellently-worded false excuses for the non-performance of various requests made to Sir Raffle by the writers. "He's about the best hand at it that I know," said Sir Raffle, one day to the secretary; "otherwise you may be sure I shouldn't keep him there." "I will allow that he is clever," said the secretary. "It isn't cleverness, so much as tact. It's what I call tact. I hadn't been long in the service before I mastered it myself; and now that I've been at the trouble to teach him I don't want to have the trouble to teach another. But upon my word he must mind his *p*'s and *q*'s; upon my word he must; and you had better tell him so." "The fact is, Mr. Kissing," said the private secretary the next day to the secretary,—Mr. Kissing was at that time secretary to the board of commissioners for the receipt of income tax—"The fact is, Mr. Kissing, Sir Raffle should never attempt to write a letter himself. He doesn't know how to do it. He always says twice too much, and yet not half enough. I wish you'd tell him so. He won't believe me." From which it will be seen Mr. Eames was proud of his special accomplishment, but did not feel any gratitude to the master who assumed to himself the glory of having taught him. On the present occasion John Eames wrote all his letters before he thought again of Lily Dale, and was able to write them without interruption, as the chairman was absent for the day at the Treasury,—or perhaps at his club. Then, when he had finished, he rang his bell, and ordered some sherry and soda-water, and stretched himself before the fire,—as though his exertions in the public service had been very great,—and seated himself comfortably in his arm-chair, and lit a cigar, and again took out Lady Julia's letter.

As regarded the cigar, it may be said that both Sir Raffle and Mr. Kissing had given orders that on no account should cigars be lit within the precincts of the Income-tax Office. Mr. Eames had taken upon

himself to understand that such orders did not apply to a private secretary, and was well aware that Sir Raffle knew his habit. To Mr. Kis-ing, I regret to say, he put himself in opposition whenever and wherever opposition was possible; so that men in the office said that one of the two must go at last. "But Johnny can do anything, you know, because he has got money." That was too frequently the opinion finally expressed among the men.

So John Eames sat down, and drank his soda-water, and smoked his cigar, and read his letter; or rather, simply that paragraph of the letter which referred to Miss Dale. "The tidings of her death have disturbed her, and set her thinking again of things that were fading from her mind." He understood it all. And yet how could it possibly be so? How could it be that she should not despise a man,—despise him if she did not hate him,—who had behaved as this man had behaved to her? It was now four years since this Crosbie had been engaged to Miss Dale, and had jilted her so heartlessly as to incur the disgust of every man in London who had heard the story. He had married an earl's daughter who had left him within a few months of their marriage, and now Mr. Crosbie's noble wife was dead. The wife was dead and simply because the man was free again, he, John Eames, was to be told that Miss Dale's mind was "disturbed," and that her thoughts were going back to things which had faded from her memory, and which should have been long since banished altogether from such holy ground.

If Lily Dale were now to marry Mr. Crosbie, anything so perversely cruel as the fate of John Eames would never yet have been told in romance. That was his own idea on the matter as he sat smoking his cigar. I have said that he was proud of his constancy, and yet, in some sort, he was also ashamed of it. He acknowledged the fact of his love, and believed himself to have out-Jacobed Jacob; but he felt that it was hard for a man who had risen in the world as he had done to be made a plaything of by a foolish passion. It was now four years ago,—that affair of Crosbie,—and Miss Dale should have accepted him long since. Half-a-dozen times he had made up his mind to be very stern to her; and he had written somewhat sternly,—but the first moment that he saw her he was conquered again. "And now that brute will reappear, and everything will be wrong again," he said to himself. If the brute did reappear, something should happen of which the world should hear

the tidings. So he lit another cigar, and began to think what that something should be.

As he did so he heard a loud noise, as of harsh, rattling winds in the next room, and he knew that Sir Raffle had come back from the Treasury. There was a creaking of boots, and a knocking of chairs, and a ringing of bells, and then a loud angry voice,—a voice that was very harsh, and on this occasion very angry. Why had not his twelve-o'clock letters been sent up to him to the West End? Why not? Mr. Eames knew all about it. Why did Mr. Eames know all about it? Why had not Mr. Eames sent them up? Where was Mr. Eames? Let Mr. Eames be sent to him. All which Mr. Eames heard standing with the cigar in his mouth and his back to the fire. "Somebody has been bullying old Buffle, I suppose. After all, he has been at the Treasury to-day," said Eames to himself. But he did not stir till the messenger had been to him, nor even then, at once. "All right, Rafferty," he said; "I'll go in just now." Then he took half-a-dozen more whiffs from the cigar, threw the remainder into the fire, and opened the door which communicated between his room and Sir Raffle's.

The great man was standing with two unopened epistles in his hand. "Eames," said he, "here are letters——" Then he stopped himself, and began upon another subject. "Did I not give express orders that I would have no smoking in the office?"

"I think Mr. Kissing said something about it, sir."

"Mr. Kissing! It was not Mr. Kissing at all. It was I. I gave the order myself."

"You'll find it began with Mr. Kissing."

"It did not begin with Mr. Kissing; it began and ended with me. What are you going to do, sir?" John Eames had stepped towards the bell, and his hand was already on the bell-pull.

"I was going to ring for the papers, sir."

"And who told you to ring for the papers? I don't want the papers. The papers won't show anything. I suppose my word may be taken without the papers. Since you're so fond of Mr. Kissing——"

"I'm not fond of Mr. Kissing at all."

"You'll have to go back to him, and let somebody come here who will not be too independent to obey my orders. Here are two most important letters have been lying here all day, instead of being sent up to me at the Treasury."

"Of course they have been lying there. I thought you were at the club."

"I told you I should go to the Treasury. I have been there all the morning with the chancellor,"—when Sir Raffle spoke officially of the chancellor he was not supposed to mean the Lord Chancellor—"and here I find letters which I particularly wanted lying upon my desk now. I must put an end to this kind of thing. I must, indeed. If you like the outer office better say so at once, and you can go."

"I'll think about it, Sir Raffle."

"Think about it! What do you mean by thinking about it? But I can't talk about that now. I'm very busy, and shall be here till past seven. I suppose you can stay?"

"All night, if you wish it, sir."

"Very well. That will do for the present.—I wouldn't have had these letters delayed for twenty pounds."

"I don't suppose it would have mattered one straw if both of them remained unopened till next week."

This last little speech, however, was not made aloud to Sir Raffle, but by Johnny to himself in the solitude of his own room.

Very soon after that he went away, Sir Raffle having discovered that one of the letters in question required his immediate return to the West End. "I've changed my mind about staying. I shan't stay now. I should have done if these letters had reached me as they ought."

"Then I suppose I can go?"

"You can do as you like about that," said Sir Raffle.

Eames did do as he liked, and went home, or to his club; and as he went he resolved that he would put an end, and at once, to the present trouble of his life. Lily Dale should accept him or reject him; and, taking either the one or the other alternative, she should hear a bit of his mind plainly spoken.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOWN AT ALLINGTON.

It was Christmas-time down at Allington, and at three o'clock on Christmas Eve, just as the darkness of the early winter evening was coming on, Lily Dale and Grace Crawley were seated together, one above the other, on the steps leading up to the pulpit in Allington Church, They had been working all day at the decorations of the church, and they were now looking round them at the result of their handiwork. To an eye unused to the gloom the place would have been nearly dark; but they could see every corner turned by the ivy sprigs, and every line on which the holly-leaves were shining. And the greeneries of the winter had not been stuck up in the old-fashioned, idle way, a bough just fastened up here and a twig inserted there; but everything had been done with some meaning, with some thought towards the original architecture of the building. The Gothic lines had been followed, and all the lower arches which it had been possible to reach with an ordinary ladder had been turned as truly with the laurel cuttings as they had been turned originally with the stone.

"I wouldn't tie another twig," said the elder girl, "for all the Christmas pudding that was ever boiled."

"It's lucky then that there isn't another twig to tie."

"I don't know about that. I see a score of places where the work has been scamped. This is the sixth time I have done the church, and I don't think I'll ever do it again. When we first began it, Bell and I,—before Bell was married,—Mrs Boyce, and the Boycian establishment generally, used to come and help. Or rather we used to help her. Now she hardly ever looks after it at all."

"She is older, I suppose."

"She's a little older, and a deal idler. How idle people do get!

Look at him. Since he has had a curate he hardly ever stirs round the parish. And he is getting so fat that—— H—sh! Here she is herself,—come to give her judgment upon us." Then a stout lady, the wife of the vicar, walked slowly up the aisle. "Well, girls," she said, "you have worked hard, and I am sure Mr. Boyce will be very much obliged to you."

"Mr. Boyce, indeed!" said Lily Dale. "We shall expect the whole parish to rise from their seats and thank us. Why didn't Jane and Bessy come and help us?"

"They were so tired when they came in from the coal club. Besides, they don't care for this kind of thing,—not as you do."

"Jane is utilitarian to the backbone, I know," said Lily, "and Bessy doesn't like getting up ladders."

"As for ladders," said Mrs. Boyce, defending her daughter, "I am not quite sure that Bessy isn't right. You don't mean to say that you did all those in the capitals yourself?"

"Every twig, with Hopkins to hold the ladder and cut the sticks; and as Hopkins is just a hundred and one years old, we could have done it pretty nearly as well alone."

"I do not think that," said Grace.

"He has been grumbling all the time," said Lily, "and swears he never will have the laurels so robbed again. Five or six years ago he used to declare that death would certainly save him from the pain of such another desecration before the next Christmas; but he has given up that foolish notion now, and talks as though he meant to protect the Allington shrubs at any rate to the end of this century."

"I am sure we gave our share from the parsonage," said Mrs. Boyce, who never understood a joke.

"All the best came from the parsonage, as of course they ought," said Lily. "But Hopkins had to make up the deficiency. And as my uncle told him to take the hay-cart for them instead of the hand-barrow, he is broken-hearted."

"I am sure he was very good-natured," said Grace.

"Nevertheless he is broken-hearted; and I am very good-natured too, and I am broken-backed. Who is going to preach to-morrow morning, Mrs. Boyce?"

"Mr. Swanton will preach in the morning."

"Tell him not to be long, because of the children's pudding. Tell Mr. Boyce if Mr. Swanton is long, we won't any of us come next Sunday."

"My dear, how can you say such wicked things! I shall not tell him anything of the kind."

"That's not wicked, Mrs. Boyce. If I were to say I had eaten so much lunch that I didn't want any dinner, you'd understand that. If Mr. Swanton will preach for three-quarters of an hour——"

"He only preached for three-quarters of an hour once, Lily."

"He has been over the half-hour every Sunday since he has been here. His average is over forty minutes, and I say it's a shame."

"It is not a shame at all, Lily," said Mrs. Boyce, becoming very serious.

"Look at my uncle; he doesn't like to go to sleep, and he has to suffer a purgatory in keeping himself awake."

"If your uncle is heavy, how can Mr. Swanton help it? If Mr. Dale's mind were on the subject, he would not sleep."

"Come, Mrs. Boyce; there's somebody else sleeps sometimes besides my uncle. When Mr. Boyce puts up his finger and just touches his nose I know as well as possible why he does it."

"Lily Dale, you have no business to say so. It is not true. I don't know how you can bring yourself to talk in that way of your own clergyman. If I were to tell your mamma she would be shocked."

"You won't be so ill-natured, Mrs. Boyce,—after all that I've done for the church."

"If you'd think more about the clergyman, Lily, and less about the church," said Mrs. Boyce very sententiously, "more about the matter and less about the manner, more of the reality and less of the form, I think you'd find that your religion would go further with you. Miss Crawley is the daughter of a clergyman, and I'm sure she'll agree with me."

"If she agrees with anybody in scolding me I'll quarrel with her."

"I didn't mean to scold you, Lily."

"I don't mind it from you, Mrs. Boyce. Indeed, I rather like it. It is a sort of pastoral visitation; and as Mr. Boyce never scolds me himself, of course I take it as coming from him by attorney." Then there was silence for a minute or two, during which Mrs. Boyce was endeavouring to discover whether Miss Dale was laughing at her or not. As she was not quite certain, she thought at last that she would let the suspected

fault pass unobserved. "Don't wait for us, Mrs. Boyce," said Lily. "We must remain till Hopkins has sent Gregory to sweep the church out and take away the rubbish. We'll see that the key is left at Mrs. Giles's."

"Thank you, my dear. Then I may as well go. I thought I'd come in and see that it was all right. I'm sure Mr. Boyce will be very much obliged to you and Miss Crawley. Good-night, my dear."

"Good-night, Mrs. Boyce; and be sure you don't let Mr. Swanton be long to-morrow." To this parting shot Mrs. Boyce made no rejoinder; but she hurried out of the church somewhat the quicker for it, and closed the door after her with something of a slam.

Of all persons clergymen are the most irreverent in the handling of things supposed to be sacred, and next to them clergymen's wives, and after them those other ladies, old or young, who take upon themselves semi-clerical duties. And it is natural that it should be so; for is it not said that familiarity does breed contempt? When a parson takes his lay friend over his church on a week-day, how much less of the spirit of genuflexion and head-uncovering the cleryman will display than the layman! The parson pulls about the woodwork and knocks about the stonework, as though it were mere wood and stone; and talks aloud in the aisle, and treats even the reading-desk as a common thing; whereas the visitor whispers gently, and carries himself as though even in looking at a church he was bound to regard himself as performing some service that was half divine. Now Lily Dale and Grace Crawley were both accustomed to churches, and had been so long at work in this church for the last two days, that the building had lost to them much of its sacredness, and they were almost as irreverent as though they were two curates.

"I am so glad she has gone," said Lily. "We shall have to stop here for the next hour as Gregory won't know what to take away and what to leave. I was so afraid she was going to stop and see us off the premises."

"I don't know why you should dislike her."

"I don't dislike her. I like her very well," said Lily Dale. "But don't you feel that there are people whom one knows very intimately, who are really friends,—for whom if they were dying one would grieve, whom if they were in misfortune one would go far to help, but with whom for all that one can have no sympathy. And yet they are so

near to one that they know all the events of one's life, and are justified by unquestioned friendship in talking about things which should never be mentioned except where sympathy exists."

"Yes; I understand that."

"Everybody understands it who has been unhappy. That woman sometimes says things to me that make me wish,—wish that they'd make him bishop of Patagonia. And yet she does it all in friendship, and mamma says that she is quite right."

"I liked her for standing up for her husband."

"But he does go to sleep,—and then he scratches his nose to show that he's awake. I shouldn't have said it, only she is always hinting at uncle Christopher. Uncle Christopher certainly does go to sleep when Mr. Boyce preaches, and he hasn't studied any scientific little movements during his slumbers to make people believe that he's all alive. I gave him a hint one day, and he got so angry with me!"

"I shouldn't have thought he could have been angry with you. It seems to me from what you say that you may do whatever you please with him."

"He is very good to me. If you knew it all,—if you could understand how good he has been! I'll try and tell you some day. It is not what he has done that makes me love him so,—but what he has thoroughly understood, and what, so understanding, he has not done, and what he has not said. It is a case of sympathy. If ever there was a gentleman uncle Christopher is one. And I used to dislike him so at one time!"

"And why?"

"Chiefly because he would make me wear brown frocks when I wanted to have them pink or green. And he kept me for six months from having them long, and up to this day he scolds me if there is half an inch on the ground for him to tread upon."

"I shouldn't mind that if I were you."

"I don't,—not now. But it used to be serious when I was a young girl. And we thought, Bell and I, that he was cross to mamma. He and mamma didn't agree at first, you know, as they do now. It is quite true that he did dislike mamma when we first came here."

"I can't think how anybody could ever dislike Mrs. Dale."

"But he did. And then he wanted to make up a marriage between Bell and my cousin Bernard. But neither of them cared a bit for the

other, and then he used to scold them,—and then,—and then,—and then—. Oh, he was so good to me! Here's Gregory at last. Gregory, we've been waiting this hour and a half."

"It ain't ten minutes since Hopkins let me come with the barrows, miss."

"Then Hopkins is a traitor. Never mind. You'd better begin now,—up there at the steps. It'll be quite dark in a few minutes. Here's Mrs. Giles with her broom. Come, Mrs. Giles; we shall have to pass the night here if you don't make haste. Are you cold, Grace?"

"No; I'm not cold. I'm thinking what they are doing now in the church at Hogglestock."

"The Hogglestock church is not pretty;—like this?"

"Oh, no. It is a very plain brick building, with something like a pigeon-house for a belfry. And the pulpit is over the reading-desk, and the reading-desk over the clerk, so that papa, when he preaches, is nearly up to the ceiling. And the whole place is divided into pews, in which the farmers hide themselves when they come to church."

"So that nobody can see whether they go to sleep or no. Oh, Mrs. Giles, you mustn't pull that down. That's what we have been putting up all day."

"But it be in the way, miss; so that the minister can't budge in or out o' the door."

"Never mind. Then he must stay one side or the other. That would be too much after all our trouble!" And Miss Dale hurried across the chancel to save some prettily arching boughs, which, in the judgment of Mrs. Giles, encroached too much on the vestry door. "As if it signified which side he was," she said in a whisper to Grace.

"I don't suppose they'll have anything in the church at home," said Grace.

"Somebody will stick up a wreath or two, I daresay."

"Nobody will. There never is anybody at Hogglestock to stick up wreaths, or to do anything for the prettinesses of life. And now there will be less done than ever. How can mamma look after holly-leaves in her present state? And yet she will miss them, too. Poor mamma sees very little that is pretty; but she has not forgotten how pleasant pretty things are."

"I wish I knew your mother, Grace."

"I think it would be impossible for any one to know mamma now,

—for any one who had not known her before. She never makes even a new acquaintance. She seems to think that there is nothing left for her in the world but to try and keep papa out of misery. And she does not succeed in that. Poor papa!"

"Is he very unhappy about this wicked accusation?"

"Yes; he is very unhappy. But, Lily, I don't know about its being wicked."

"But you know that it is untrue."

"Of course I know that papa did not mean to take anything that was not his own. But, you see, nobody knows where it came from; and nobody except mamma and Jane and I understand how very absent papa can be. I'm sure he doesn't know the least in the world how he came by it himself, or he would tell mamma. Do you know, Lily, I think I have been wrong to come away."

"Don't say that, dear. Remember how anxious Mrs. Crawley was that you should come."

"But I cannot bear to be comfortable here while they are so wretched at home. It seems such a mockery. Every time I find myself smiling at what you say to me, I think I must be the most heartless creature in the world."

"Is it so very bad with them, Grace?"

"Indeed it is bad. I don't think you can imagine what mamma has to go through. She has to cook all that is eaten in the house, and then, very often, there is no money in the house to buy anything. If you were to see the clothes she wears, even that would make your heart bleed. I who have been used to being poor all my life,—even I, when I am at home, am dismayed by what she has to endure."

"What can we do for her, Grace?"

"You can do nothing, Lily. But when things are like that at home you can understand what I feel in being here."

Mrs. Giles and Gregory had now completed their task, or had so nearly done so as to make Miss Dale think that she might safely leave the church. "We will go in now," she said; "for it is dark and cold, and what I call creepy. Do you ever fancy that perhaps you will see a ghost some day?"

"I don't think I shall ever see a ghost; but all the same I should be half afraid to be here alone in the dark."

"I am often here alone in the dark, but I am beginning to think I

shall never see a ghost now. I am losing all my romance, and getting to be an old woman. Do you know, Grace, I do so hate myself for being such an old maid."

"But who says you're an old maid, Lily?"

"I see it in people's eyes, and hear it in their voices. And they all talk to me as if I were very steady, and altogether removed from anything like fun and frolic. It seems to be admitted that if a girl does not want to fall in love, she ought not to care for any other fun in the world. If anybody made out a list of the old ladies in these parts, they'd put down Lady Julia and mamma, and Mrs. Boyce and me, and old Mrs. Hearne. The very children have an awful respect for me, and give over playing directly they see me. Well, mamma, we've done at last, and I have had such a scolding from Mrs. Boyce."

"I daresay you deserved it, my dear."

"No, I did not, mamma. Ask Grace if I did."

"Was she not saucy to Mrs. Boyce, Miss Crawley?"

"She said that Mr. Boyce scratches his nose in church," said Grace.

"So he does; and goes to sleep, too."

"If you told Mrs. Boyce that, Lily, I think she was quite right to scold you."

Such was Miss Lily Dale, with whom Grace Crawley was staying;—Lily Dale with whom Mr. John Eames, of the Income-tax Office, had been so long and so steadily in love that he was regarded among his fellow-clerks as a miracle of constancy,—who had, herself, in former days been so unfortunate in love as to have been regarded among her friends in the country as the most ill-used of women. As John Eames had been able to be comfortable in life,—that is to say, not utterly a wretch,—in spite of his love, so had she managed to hold up her head, and live as other young women live, in spite of her misfortune. But as it may be said also that his constancy was true constancy, although he knew how to enjoy the good things of the world, so also had her misfortune been a true misfortune, although she had been able to bear it without much outer show of shipwreck. For a few days,—for a week or two, when the blow first struck her, she had been knocked down, and the friends who were nearest to her had thought that she would never again stand erect upon her feet. But she had been very strong, stout at heart, of a fixed purpose, and capable of resistance against oppression.

Even her own mother had been astonished, and sometimes almost dismayed, by the strength of her will. Her mother knew well how it was with her now; but they who saw her frequently, and who did not know her as her mother knew her,—the Mrs. Boyces of her acquaintance,—whispered among themselves that Lily Dale was not so soft of heart as people used to think.

On the next day, Christmas Day, as the reader will remember, Grace Crawley was taken up to dine at the big house with the old squire. Mrs. Dale's eldest daughter, with her husband, Dr. Crofts, was to be there; and also Lily's old friend, who was also especially the old friend of Johnny Eames, Lady Julia De Guest. Grace had endeavoured to be excused from the party, pleading many pleas. But the upshot of all her pleas was this,—that while her father's position was so painful she ought not to go out anywhere. In answer to this, Lily Dale, corroborated by her mother, assured her that for her father's sake she ought not to exhibit any such feeling; that in doing so, she would seem to express a doubt as to her father's innocence. Then she allowed herself to be persuaded, telling her friend, however, that she knew the day would be very miserable to her. "It will be very humdrum, if you please," said Lily. "Nothing can be more humdrum than Christmas at the Great House. Nevertheless, you must go."

Coming out of church, Grace was introduced to the old squire. He was a thin, old man, with grey hair, and the smallest possible grey whiskers, with a dry, solemn face; not carrying in his outward gait much of the customary jollity of Christmas. He took his hat off to Grace, and said some word to her as to hoping to have the pleasure of seeing her at dinner. It sounded very cold to her, and she became at once afraid of him. "I wish I was not going," she said to Lily, again. "I know he thinks I ought not to go. I shall be so thankful if you will but let me stay."

"Don't be foolish, Grace. It all comes from your not knowing him, or understanding him. And how should you understand him? I give you my word that I would tell you if I did not know that he wishes you to go."

She had to go. "Of course I haven't a dress fit. How should I?" she said to Lily. "How wrong it is of me to put myself up to such a thing as this."

"Your dress is beautiful, child. We are none of us going in

evening-dresses. Pray believe that I will not make you do wrong. If you won't trust me, can't you trust mamma?"

Of course she went. When the three ladies entered the drawing-room of the Great House they found that Lady Julia had arrived before them. Lady Julia immediately took hold of Lily, and led her apart, having a word or two to say about the clerk in the Income-tax Office. I am not sure but what the dear old woman sometimes said a few more words than were expedient, with a view to the object which she had so closely at heart. "John is to be with us the first week in February," she said. "I suppose you'll see him before that, as he'll probably be with his mother a few days before he comes to me."

"I daresay we shall see him quite in time, Lady Julia," said Lily.

"Now, Lily, don't be ill-natured."

"I'm the most good-natured young woman alive, Lady Julia, and as for Johnny, he is always made as welcome at the Small House as violets in March. Mamma purrs about him when he comes, asking all manner of flattering questions as though he were a cabinet minister at least, and I always admire some little knicknack that he has got, a new ring, or a stud, or a button. There isn't another man in all the world whose buttons I'd look at."

"It isn't his buttons, Lily."

"Ah, that's just it. I can go as far as his buttons. But come, Lady Julia, this is Christmas-time, and Christmas should be a holiday."

In the mean time Mrs. Dale was occupied with her married daughter and her son-in-law, and the squire had attached himself to poor Grace. "You have never been in this part of the country before, Miss Crawley." he said.

"No, sir."

"It is rather pretty just about here, and Guestwick Manor is a fine place in its way, but we have not so much natural beauty as you have in Barsetshire. Chaldicote Chase is, I think, as pretty as anything in England."

"I never saw Chaldicote Chase, sir. It isn't pretty at all at Hogglestock, where we live."

"Ah, I forgot. No; it is not very pretty at Hogglestock. That's where the bricks come from."

"Papa is clergyman at Hogglestock."

"Yes, yes; I remember. Your father is a great scholar. I have

often heard of him. I am so sorry he should be distressed by this charge they have made. But it will all come right at the assizes. They always get at the truth there. I used to be intimate with a clergyman in Barsetshire of the name of Grantly;"—Grace felt that her ears were tingling, and that her face was red;—"Archdeacon Grantly. His father was bishop of the diocese."

"Yes, sir. Archdeacon Grantly lives at Plumstead."

"I was staying once with an old friend of mine, Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, who lives close to Plumstead, and saw a good deal of them. I remember thinking Henry Grantly was a very nice lad. He married afterwards."

"Yes, sir; but his wife is dead now, and he has got a little girl,—Edith Grantly."

"Is there no other child?"

"No, sir; only Edith."

"You know him, then?"

"Yes, sir; I know Major Grantly,—and Edith. I never saw Archdeacon Grantly."

"Then, my dear, you never saw a very famous pillar of the Church. I remember when people used to talk a great deal about Archdeacon Grantly; but when his time came to be made a bishop, he was not sufficiently new-fangled; and so he got passed by. He is much better off as he is, I should say. Bishops have to work very hard, my dear."

"Do they, sir?"

"So they tell me. And the archdeacon is a wealthy man. So Henry Grantly has got an only daughter? I hope she is a nice child, for I remember liking him well."

"She is a very nice child, indeed, Mr. Dale. She could not be nicer. And she is so lovely." Then Mr. Dale looked into his young companion's face, struck by the sudden animation of her words, and perceived for the first time that she was very pretty.

After this Grace became accustomed to the strangeness of the faces round her, and managed to eat her dinner without much perturbation of spirit. When after dinner the squire proposed to her that they should drink the health of her papa and mamma, she was almost reduced to tears, and yet she liked him for doing it. It was terrible to her to have them mentioned, knowing as she did that every one who mentioned them must be aware of their misery,—for the misfortune of her father

had become notorious in the country; but it was almost more terrible to her that no allusion should be made to them; for then she would be driven to think that her father was regarded as a man whom the world could not afford to mention.

"Papa and mamma," she just murmured, raising her glass to her lips.

"Grace, dear," said Lily from across the table, "here's papa and mamma, and the young man at Marlborough who is carrying everything before him."

"Yes; we won't forget the young man at Marlborough," said the squire. Grace felt this to be good-natured, because her brother at Marlborough was the one bright spot in her family,—and she was comforted.

"And we will drink the health of my friend, John Eames," said Lady Julia.

"John Eames' health," said the squire, in a low voice.

"Johnny's health," said Mrs. Dale; but Mrs. Dale's voice was not very brisk.

"John's health," said Dr. Crofts and Mrs. Crofts in a breath.

"Here's the health of Johnny Eames," said Lily; and her voice was the clearest and the boldest of them all. But she made up her mind that if Lady Julia could not be induced to spare her for the future, she and Lady Julia must quarrel. "No one can understand," she said to her mother that evening, "how dreadful it is,—this being constantly told before one's family and friends that one ought to marry a certain young man."

"She didn't say that, my dear."

"I should much prefer that she should, for then I could get up on my legs and answer her off the reel. Of course everybody there understood what she meant,—including old John Bates, who stood at the sideboard and coolly drank the toast himself."

"He always does that to all the family toasts on Christmas Day. Your uncle likes it."

"That wasn't a family toast, and John Bates had no right to drink it."

After dinner they all played cards,—a round game,—and the squire put in the stakes. "Now, Grace," said Lily, "you are the visitor, and you must win, or else uncle Christopher won't be happy. He always likes a young lady visitor to win."

"But I never played a game of cards in my life."

"Go and sit next to him and he'll teach you. Uncle Christopher, won't you teach Grace Crawley? She never saw a Pope Joan board in her life before."

"Come here, my dear, and sit next to me. Dear, dear, dear; fancy Henry Grantly having a little girl. What a handsome lad he was. And it seems only yesterday." If it was so that Lily had said a word to her uncle about Grace and the major, the old squire had become on a sudden very sly. Be that as it may, Grace Crawley thought that he was a pleasant old man; and though, while talking to him about Edith, she persisted in not learning to play Pope Joan, so that he could not contrive that she should win, nevertheless the squire took to her very kindly, and told her to come up with Lily and see him sometimes while she was staying at the Small House. The squire in speaking of his sister-in-law's cottage always called it the Small House.

"Only think of my winning," said Lady Julia, drawing together her wealth. "Well, I'm sure I want it bad enough, for I don't at all know whether I've got any income of my own. It's all John Eames' fault, my dear, for he won't go and make those people settle it in Lincoln's Inn Fields." Poor Lily, who was standing on the hearth-rug, touched her mother's arm. She knew that Johnny's name was lugged in with reference to Lady Julia's money altogether for her benefit. "I wonder whether she ever had a Johnny of her own," she said to her mother, "and, if so, whether she liked it when her friends sent the town-crier round to talk about him."

"She means to be good-natured," said Mrs. Dale.

"Of course she does. But it is such a pity when people won't understand."

"My uncle didn't bite you after all, Grace," said Lily to her friend as they were going home at night, by the pathway which led from the garden of one house to the garden of the other.

"I like Mr. Dale very much," said Grace. "He was very kind to me."

"There is some queer-looking animal of whom they say that he is better than he looks, and I always think of that saying when I think of my uncle."

"For shame, Lily," said her mother. "Your uncle, for his age, is as good a looking man as I know. And he always looks like just what he is,—an English gentleman."

"I didn't mean to say a word against his dear old face and figure, mamma; but his heart, and mind, and general disposition, as they come out in experience and days of trial, are so much better than the samples of them which he puts on the counter for men and women to judge by. He wears well, and he washes well,—if you know what I mean, Grace."

"Yes; I think I know what you mean."

"The Apollos of the world,—I don't mean in outward looks, mamma, —but the Apollos in heart, the men,—and the women too,—who are so full of feeling, so soft-natured, so kind, who never say a cross word, who never get out of bed on the wrong side in the morning,—it so often turns out that they won't wash."

Such was the expression of Miss Lily Dale's experience.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. CRAWLEY IS SUMMONED TO BARCHESTER.

THE scene which occurred in Hogglestock church on the Sunday after Mr. Thumble's first visit to that parish had not been described with absolute accuracy either by the archdeacon in his letter to his son, or by Mrs. Thorne. There had been no footman from the palace in attendance on Mr. Thumble, nor had there been a battle with the brickmakers; neither had Mr. Thumble been put under the pump. But Mr. Thumble had gone over, taking his gown and surplice with him, on the Sunday morning, and had intimated to Mr. Crawley his intention of performing the service. Mr. Crawley, in answer to this, had assured Mr. Thumble that he would not be allowed to open his mouth in the church; and Mr. Thumble, not seeing his way to any further successful action, had contented himself with attending the services in his surplice, making thereby a silent protest that he, and

not Mr. Crawley, ought to have been in the reading-desk and the pulpit.

When Mr. Thumble reported himself and his failure at the palace, he strove hard to avoid seeing Mrs. Proudie, but not successfully. He knew something of the palace habits, and did manage to reach the bishop alone on the Sunday evening, justifying himself to his lordship for such an interview by the remarkable circumstances of the case and the importance of his late mission. Mrs. Proudie always went to church on Sunday evenings, making a point of hearing three services and three sermons every Sunday of her life. On week-days she seldom heard any, having an idea that week-day services were an invention of the High-Church enemy, and that they should therefore be vehemently discouraged. Services on saints' days she regarded as rank papacy, and had been known to accuse a clergyman's wife, to her face, of idolatry, because the poor lady had dated a letter, St. John's Eve. Mr. Thumble, on this Sunday evening, was successful in finding the bishop at home, and alone, but he was not lucky enough to get away before Mrs. Proudie returned. The bishop, perhaps, thought that the story of the failure had better reach his wife's ears from Mr. Thumble's lips than from his own.

"Well, Mr. Thumble!" said Mrs. Proudie, walking into the study, armed in her full Sunday-evening winter panoply, in which she had just descended from her carriage. The church which Mrs. Proudie attended in the evening was nearly half a mile from the palace, and the coachman and groom never got a holiday on a Sunday night. She was gorgeous in a dark brown silk dress of awful stiffness and terrible dimensions; and on her shoulders she wore a short cloak of velvet and fur, very handsome withal, but so swelling in its proportions on all sides as necessarily to create more of dismay than of admiration in the mind of any ordinary man. And her bonnet was a monstrous helmet with the beaver up, displaying the awful face of the warrior, always ready for combat, and careless to guard itself from attack. The large contorted bows which she bore were as a grisly crest upon her casque, beautiful, doubtless, but majestic and fear-compelling. In her hand she carried her armour all complete, a prayer-book, a bible, and a book of hymns. These the footman had brought for her to the study-door, but she had thought fit to enter her husband's room with them in her own custody. "Well, Mr. Thumble!" she said. Mr Thumble did not

answer at once, thinking, probably, that the bishop might choose to explain the circumstances. But neither did the bishop say anything. "Well, Mr. Thumble!" she said again; and then she stood looking at the man who had failed so disastrously.

"I have explained to the bishop," said he. "Mr. Crawley has been contumacious,—very contumacious indeed."

"But you preached at Hogglestock?"

"No, indeed, Mrs. Proudie. Nor would it have been possible, unless I had had the police to assist me."

"Then you should have had the police. I never heard of anything so mismanaged in all my life;—never in all my life." And she put her books down on the study table, and turned herself round from Mr. Thumble towards the bishop. "If things go on like this, my lord," she said, "your authority in the diocese will very soon be worth nothing at all." It was not often that Mrs. Proudie called her husband my lord, but when she did so, it was a sign that terrible times had come;—times so terrible that the bishop would know that he must either fight or fly. He would almost endure anything rather than descend into the arena for the purpose of doing battle with his wife, but occasions would come now and again when even the alternative of flight was hardly left to him.

"But, my dear,——" began the bishop.

"Am I to understand that this man has professed himself to be altogether indifferent to the bishop's prohibition?" said Mrs. Proudie, interrupting her husband and addressing Mr. Thumble.

"Quite so. He seemed to think that the bishop had no lawful power in the matter at all," said Mr. Thumble.

"Do you hear that, my lord?" said Mrs. Proudie.

"Nor have I any," said the bishop, almost weeping as he spoke.

"No authority in your own diocese!"

"None to silence a man merely by my own judgment. I thought, and still think, that it was for this gentleman's own interest, as well as for the credit of the Church, that some provision should be made for his duties during his present—present—difficulties."

"Difficulties indeed! Everybody knows that the man has been a thief."

"No, my dear; I do not know it."

"You never know anything, bishop."

"I mean to say that I do not know it officially. Of course I have heard the sad story; and, though I hope it may not be the——"

"There is no doubt about its truth. All the world knows it. He has stolen twenty pounds, and yet he is to be allowed to desecrate the Church, and imperil the souls of the people!" The bishop got up from his chair and began to walk backwards and forwards through the room with short quick steps. "It only wants five days to Christmas Day," continued Mrs. Proudie, "and something must be done at once. I say nothing as to the propriety or impropriety of his being out on bail, as it is no affair of ours. When I heard that he had been bailed by a beneficed clergyman of this diocese, of course I knew where to look for the man who would act with so much impropriety. Of course I was not surprised when I found that that person belonged to Framley. But, as I have said before, that is no business of ours. I hope, Mr. Thumble, that the bishop will never be found interfering with the ordinary laws of the land. I am very sure that he will never do so by my advice. But when there comes a question of inhibiting a clergyman who has committed himself as this clergyman unfortunately has done, then I say that that clergyman ought to be inhibited." The bishop walked up and down the room throughout the whole of this speech, but gradually his steps became quicker, and his turns became shorter. "And now here is Christmas Day upon us, and what is to be done?" With these words Mrs. Proudie finished her speech.

"Mr. Thumble," said the bishop, "perhaps you had better now retire. I am very sorry that you should have had so thankless and so disagreeable a task."

"Why should Mr. Thumble retire?" asked Mrs. Proudie.

"I think it better," said the bishop. "Mr. Thumble, good-night." Then Mr. Thumble did retire, and Mrs. Proudie stood forth in her full panoply of armour, silent and awful, with her helmet erect, and vouchsafed no recognition whatever of the parting salutation with which Mr. Thumble greeted her. "My dear, the truth is, you do not understand the matter," said the bishop as soon as the door was closed. "You do not know how limited is my power."

"Bishop, I understand it a great deal better than some people; and I understand also what is due to myself and the manner in which I ought to be treated by you in the presence of the subordinate clergy of the diocese. I shall not, however, remain here to be insulted either in

the presence or in the absence of any one." Then the conquered amazon collected together the weapons which she had laid upon the table, and took her departure with majestic step, and not without the clang of arms. The bishop, when he was left alone, enjoyed for a few moments the triumph of his victory.

But then he was left so very much alone! When he looked round about him upon his solitude after the departure of his wife, and remembered that he should not see her again till he should encounter her on ground that was all her own, he regretted his own success, and was tempted to follow her and to apologize. He was unable to do anything alone. He would not even know how to get his tea, as the very servants would ask questions, if he were to do so unaccustomed a thing as to order it to be brought up to him in his solitude. They would tell him that Mrs. Proudie was having tea in her little sitting-room upstairs, or else that the things were laid in the drawing-room. He did wander forth to the latter apartment, hoping that he might find his wife there; but the drawing-room was dark and deserted, and so he wandered back again. It was a grand thing certainly to have triumphed over his wife, and there was a crumb of comfort in the thought that he had vindicated himself before Mr. Thumble; but the general result was not comforting, and he knew from of old how short-lived his triumph would be.

But wretched as he was during that evening he did employ himself with some energy. After much thought he resolved that he would again write to Mr. Crawley, and summon him to appear at the palace. In doing this he would at any rate be doing something. There would be action. And though Mr. Crawley would, as he thought, decline to obey the order, something would be gained even by that disobedience. So he wrote his summons,—sitting very comfortless and all alone on that Sunday evening,—dating his letter, however, for the following day:—

"Palace, December 20, 186—.

"REVEREND SIR,—

"I HAVE just heard from Mr. Thumble that you have declined to accede to the advice which I thought it my duty to tender to you as the bishop who has been set over you by the Church, and that you yesterday insisted on what you believed to be your right to administer the services in the parish church of Hogglestock. This has occasioned me the deepest regret. It is, I think, unavailing that I should further

write to you my mind upon the subject, as I possess such strong evidence that my written word will not be respected by you. I have, therefore, no alternative now but to invite you to come to me here; and this I do, hoping that I may induce you to listen to that authority which I cannot but suppose you acknowledge to be vested in the office which I hold.

"I shall be glad to see you on to-morrow, Tuesday, as near the hour of two as you can make it convenient to yourself to be here, and I will take care to order that refreshment shall be provided for yourself and your horse.

"I am, Reverend Sir,
"&c. &c. &c.
"THOS. BARNUM."

"My dear," he said, when he did again encounter his wife that night, "I have written to Mr. Crawley, and I thought I might as well bring up the copy of my letter."

"I wash my hands of the whole affair," said Mrs. Proudie—"of the whole affair!"

"But you will look at the letter?"

"Certainly not. Why should I look at the letter? My word goes for nothing. I have done what I could, but in vain. Now let us see how you will manage it yourself."

The bishop did not pass a comfortable night; but in the morning his wife did read his letter and after that things went a little smoother with him. She was pleased to say that, considering all things;—seeing, as she could not help seeing, that the matter had been dreadfully mismanaged, and that great weakness had been displayed;—seeing that these faults had already been committed, perhaps no better step could now be taken than that proposed in the letter.

"I suppose he will not come," said the bishop.

"I think he will," said Mrs. Proudie, "and I trust that we may be able to convince him that obedience will be his best course. He will be more humble-minded here than at Hogglestock." In saying this the lady showed some knowledge of the general nature of clergymen and of the world at large. She understood how much louder a cock can crow in its own farmyard than elsewhere, and knew that episcopal authority backed by all the solemn awe of palatial grandeur goes much

further than it will do when sent under the folds of an ordinary envelope. But though she understood ordinary human nature, it may be that she did not understand Mr. Crawley's nature.

But she was at any rate right in her idea as to Mr. Crawley's immediate reply. The palace groom who rode over to Hogglestock returned with an immediate answer.

"My Lord"—said Mr. Crawley,

"I will obey your lordship's summons, and, unless impediments should arise, I will wait upon your lordship at the hour you name to-morrow. I will not trespass on your hospitality. For myself, I rarely break bread in any house but my own; and as to the horse, I have none.

"I have the honour to be,

"My lord, &c. &c.

"Josiah Crawley."

"Of course I shall go," he had said to his wife as soon as he had had time to read the letter, and make known to her the contents. "I shall go if it be possible for me to get there. I think that I am bound to comply with the bishop's wishes in so much as that."

"But how will you get there, Josiah?"

"I will walk,—with the Lord's aid."

Now Hogglestock was fifteen miles from Barchester, and Mr. Crawley was, as his wife well knew, by no means fitted in his present state for great physical exertion. But from the tone in which he had replied to her, she well knew that it would not avail for her to remonstrate at the moment. He had walked more than thirty miles in a day since they had been living at Hogglestock, and she did not doubt but that it might be possible for him to do it again. Any scheme, which she might be able to devise for saving him from so terrible a journey in the middle of winter, must be pondered over silently, and brought to bear, if not slyly, at least deftly, and without discussion. She made no reply therefore when he declared that on the following day he would walk to Barchester and back,—with the Lord's aid; nor did she see, or ask to see, the note which he sent to the bishop. When the messenger was gone, Mr. Crawley was all alert, looking forward with evident glee to his encounter with the bishop,—snorting like a race-

horse at the expected triumph of the coming struggle. And he read much Greek with Jane on that afternoon, pouring into her young ears, almost with joyous rapture, his appreciation of the glory and the pathos and the humanity, as also of the awful tragedy, of the story of Œdipus. His very soul was on fire at the idea of clutching the weak bishop in his hand, and crushing him with his strong grasp.

In the afternoon Mrs. Crawley slipped out to a neighbouring farmer's wife, and returned in an hour's time with a little story which she did not tell with any appearance of eager satisfaction. She had learned well what were the little tricks necessary to the carrying of such a matter as that which she had now in hand. Mr. Mangle, the farmer, as it happened, was going to-morrow morning in his tax-cart as far as Framley Mill, and would be delighted if Mr. Crawley would take a seat. He must remain at Framley the best part of the afternoon, and hoped that Mr. Crawley would take a seat back again. Now Framley Mill was only half a mile off the direct road to Barchester, and was almost half way from Hogglestock parsonage to the city. This would, at any rate, bring the walk within a practicable distance. Mr. Crawley was instantly placed upon his guard, like an animal that sees the bait and suspects he trap. Had he been told that farmer Mangle was going all the way to Barchester, nothing would have induced him to get into the cart. He would have felt sure that farmer Mangle had been persuaded to pity him in his poverty and his strait, and he would sooner have started to walk to London than have put a foot upon the step of the cart. But this lift half way did look to him as though it were really fortuitous. His wife could hardly have been cunning enough to persuade the farmer to go to Framley, conscious that the trap would have been suspected had the bait been made more full. But I fear,—I fear the dear good woman had been thus cunning,—had understood how far the trap might be baited, and had thus succeeded in catching her prey.

On the following morning he consented to get into farmer Mangle's cart, and was driven as far as Framley Mill. "I wouldn't think nowt, your reverence, of running you over into Barchester,—that I wouldn't. The powny is so mortial good," said farmer Mangle in his foolish good nature.

"And how about your business here?" said Mr. Crawley. The farmer scratched his head, remembering all Mrs. Crawley's injunctions, and awkwardly acknowledged that to be sure his own business with the

miller was very pressing. Then Mr. Crawley descended, terribly suspicious, and went on his journey.

"Anyways, your reverence will call for me coming back?" said farmer Mangle. But Mr. Crawley would make no promise. He bade the farmer not wait for him. If they chanced to meet together on the road he might get up again. If the man really had business at Framley, how could he have offered to go on to Barchester? Were they deceiving him? The wife of his bosom had deceived him in such matters before now. But his trouble in this respect was soon dissipated by the pride of his anticipated triumph over the bishop. He took great glory from the thought that he would go before the bishop with dirty boots —with boots necessarily dirty,—with rusty pantaloons, that he would be hot and mud-stained with his walk, hungry, and an object to be wondered at by all who should see him, because of the misfortunes which had been unworthily heaped upon his head; whereas the bishop would be sleek and clean and well-fed,—pretty with all the prettinesses that are becoming to a bishop's outward man. And he, Mr. Crawley, would be humble, whereas the bishop would be very proud. And the bishop would be in his own arm-chair,—the cock in his own farmyard, while he, Mr. Crawley, would be seated afar off, in the cold extremity of the room, with nothing of outward circumstances to assist him,—a man called thither to undergo censure. And yet he would take the bishop in his grasp and crush him,—crush him,—crush him! As he thought of this he walked quickly through the mud, and put out his long arm and his great hand, far before him out into the air, and, there and then, he crushed the bishop in his imagination. Yes, indeed! He thought it very doubtful whether the bishop would ever send for him a second time. As all this passed through his mind, he forgot his wife's cunning, and farmer Mangle's sin, and for the moment he was happy.

As he turned a corner round by Lord Lufton's park paling, who should he meet but his old friend Mr. Robarts, the parson of Framley, —the parson who had committed the sin of being bail for him,—the sin, that is, according to Mrs. Proudie's view of the matter. He was walking with his hand still stretched out,—still crushing the bishop, when Mr. Robarts was close upon him.

"What, Crawley! upon my word I am very glad to see you; you are coming up to me, of course?"

"Thank you, Mr. Robarts; no, not to-day. The bishop has summoned me to his presence, and I am on my road to Barchester."

"But how are you going?"

"I shall walk."

"Walk to Barchester. Impossible!"

"I hope not quite impossible, Mr. Robarts. I trust I shall get as far before two o'clock; but to do so I must be on my road." Then he showed signs of a desire to go on upon his way without further parley.

"But, Crawley, do let me send you over. There is the horse and gig doing nothing."

"Thank you, Mr. Robarts; no. I should prefer the walk to-day."

"And you have walked from Hogglestock?"

"No;—not so. A neighbour coming hither, who happened to have business at your mill,—he brought me so far in his cart. The walk home will be nothing,—nothing. I shall enjoy it. Good-morning, Mr. Robarts."

But Mr. Robarts thought of the dirty road, and of the bishop's presence, and of his own ideas of what would be becoming for a clergyman,—and persevered. "You will find the lanes so very muddy; and our bishop, you know, is apt to notice such things. Do be persuaded."

"Notice what things?" demanded Mr. Crawley, in an indignant tone.

"He, or perhaps she rather, will say how dirty your shoes were when you came to the palace."

"If he, or she, can find nothing unclean about me but my shoes, let them say their worst. I shall be very indifferent. I have long ceased, Mr. Robarts, to care much what any man or woman may say about my shoes. Good morning." Then he stalked on, clutching and crushing in his hand the bishop, and the bishop's wife, and the whole diocese, and all the Church of England. Dirty shoes, indeed! Whose was the fault that there were in the Church so many feet soiled by unmerited poverty, and so many hands soiled by undeserved wealth? If the bishop did not like his shoes, let the bishop dare to tell him so! So he walked on through the thick of the mud, by no means picking his way.

He walked fast, and he found himself in the close half an hour before the time named by the bishop. But on no account would he have rung the palace bell one minute before two o'clock. So he walked up and down under the towers of the cathedral, and cooled himself, and looked

up at the pleasant plate-glass in the windows of the house of his friend the dean, and told himself how, in their college days, he and the dean had been quite equal,—quite equal, except that by the voices of all qualified judges in the university, he, Mr. Crawley, had been acknowledged to be the riper scholar. And now the Mr. Arabin of those days was Dean of Barchester,—travelling abroad luxuriously at this moment for his delight, while he, Crawley, was perpetual curate at Hogglestock, and had now walked into Barchester at the command of the bishop, because he was suspected of having stolen twenty pounds! When he had fully imbued his mind with the injustice of all this, his time was up, and he walked boldly to the bishop's gate, and boldly rang the bishop's bell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BISHOP OF BARCHESTER IS CRUSHED.

WHO inquires why it is that a little greased flour rubbed in among the hair on a footman's head,—just one dab here and another there,—gives such a tone of high life to the family? And seeing that the thing is so easily done, why do not more people attempt it? The tax on hair-powder is but thirteen shillings a year. It may, indeed, be that the slightest dab in the world justifies the wearer in demanding hot meat three times a day, and wine at any rate on Sundays. I think, however, that a bishop's wife may enjoy the privilege without such heavy attendant expense; otherwise the man who opened the bishop's door to Mr. Crawley would hardly have been so ornamented.

The man asked for a card. "My name is Mr. Crawley," said our friend. "The bishop has desired me to come to him at this hour. Will you be pleased to tell him that I am here." The man again asked for a card. "I am not bound to carry with me my name printed on a

ticket," said Mr. Crawley. "If you cannot remember it, give me pen and paper, and I will write it." The servant, somewhat awed by the stranger's manner, brought the pen and paper, and Mr. Crawley wrote his name—

"The Rev. Josiah Crawley, M.A.,
Perpetual Curate of Hogglestock."

He was then ushered into a waiting-room, but, to his disappointment, was not kept there waiting long. Within three minutes he was ushered into the bishop's study, and into the presence of the two great luminaries of the diocese. He was at first somewhat disconcerted by finding Mrs. Proudie in the room. In the imaginary conversation with the bishop which he had been preparing on the road, he had conceived that the bishop would be attended by a chaplain, and he had suited his words to the joint discomfiture of the bishop and of the lower clergyman; but now the line of his battle must be altered. This was no doubt an injury, but he trusted to his courage and readiness to enable him to surmount it. He had left his hat behind him in the waiting-room, but he kept his old short cloak still upon his shoulders; and when he entered the bishop's room his hands and arms were hid beneath it. There was something lowly in this constrained gait. It showed at least that he had no idea of being asked to shake hands with the august persons he might meet. And his head was somewhat bowed, though his great, bald, broad forehead showed itself so prominent, that neither the bishop nor Mrs. Proudie could drop it from their sight during the whole interview. He was a man who when seen could hardly be forgotten. The deep angry remonstrant eyes, the shaggy eyebrows, telling tales of frequent anger,—of anger frequent but generally silent,—the repressed indignation of the habitual frown, the long nose and large powerful mouth, the deep furrows on the cheek, and the general look of thought and suffering, all combined to make the appearance of the man remarkable, and to describe to the beholders at once his true character. No one ever on seeing Mr. Crawley took him to be a happy man, or a weak man, or an ignorant man, or a wise man.

"You are very punctual, Mr. Crawley," said the bishop. Mr. Crawley simply bowed his head, still keeping his hands beneath his cloak. "Will you not take a chair nearer to the fire?" Mr. Crawley had not

seated himself, but had placed himself in front of a chair at the extreme end of the room, resolved that he would not use it unless he were duly asked. Now he seated himself,—still at a distance.

"Thank you, my lord," he said, "I am warm with walking, and, if you please, will avoid the fire."

"You have not walked, Mr. Crawley?"

"Yes, my lord. I have been walking."

"Not from Hogglestock!"

Now this was a matter which Mr. Crawley certainly did not mean to discuss with the bishop. It might be well for the bishop to demand his presence in the palace, but it could be no part of the bishop's duty to inquire how he got there. "That, my lord, is a matter of no moment," said he. "I am glad at any rate that I have been enabled to obey your lordship's order in coming hither on this morning."

Hitherto Mrs. Proudie had not said a word. She stood back in the room, near the fire,—more backward a good deal than she was accustomed to do when clergymen made their ordinary visits. On such occasions she would come forward and shake hands with them graciously, —graciously even, if proudly; but she had felt that she must do nothing of that kind now; there must be no shaking hands with a man who had stolen a cheque for twenty pounds! It might probably be necessary to keep Mr. Crawley at a distance, and therefore she had remained in the background. But Mr. Crawley seemed to be disposed to keep himself in the background, and therefore she could speak. "I hope your wife and children are well, Mr. Crawley?" she said.

"Thank you, madam, my children are well, and Mrs. Crawley suffers no special ailment at present."

"That is much to be thankful for, Mr. Crawley." Whether he were or were not thankful for such mercies as these was no business of the bishop or of the bishop's wife. That was between him and his God. So he would not even bow to this civility, but sat with his head erect, and with a great frown on his heavy brow.

Then the bishop rose from his chair to speak, intending to take up a position on the rug. But as he did so Mr. Crawley rose also, and the bishop found that he would thus lose his expected vantage. "Will you not be seated, Mr. Crawley?" said the bishop. Mr. Crawley smiled, but stood his ground. Then the bishop returned to his arm-chair, and Mr. Crawley also sat down again. "Mr. Crawley," began

the bishop, "this matter which came the other day before the magistrates at Silverbridge has been a most unfortunate affair. It has given me, I can assure you, the most sincere pain."

Mr. Crawley had made up his mind how far the bishop should be allowed to go without a rebuke. He had told himself that it would only be natural, and would not be unbecoming, that the bishop should allude to the meeting of the magistrates and to the alleged theft, and that therefore such allusion should be endured with patient humility. And, moreover, the more rope he gave the bishop, the more likely the bishop would be to entangle himself. It certainly was Mr. Crawley's wish that the bishop should entangle himself. He, therefore, replied very meekly, "It has been most unfortunate, my lord."

"I have felt for Mrs. Crawley very deeply," said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had now made up his mind that as long as it was possible he would ignore the presence of Mrs. Proudie altogether; and, therefore, he made no sign that he heard the latter remark.

"It has been most unfortunate," continued the bishop. "I have never before had a clergyman in my diocese placed in so distressing a position."

"That is a matter of opinion, my lord," said Mr. Crawley, who at that moment thought of a crisis which had come in the life of another clergyman in the diocese of Barchester, with the circumstances of which he had by chance been made acquainted.

"Exactly," said the bishop. "And I am expressing my opinion." Mr. Crawley, who understood fighting, did not think that the time had yet come for striking a blow, so he simply bowed again. "A most unfortunate position, Mr. Crawley," continued the bishop. "Far be it from me to express an opinion upon the matter, which will have to come before a jury of your countrymen. It is enough for me to know that the magistrates assembled at Silverbridge, gentlemen to whom no doubt you must be known, as most of them live in your neighbourhood, have heard evidence upon the subject——"

"Most convincing evidence," said Mrs. Proudie, interrupting her husband. Mr. Crawley's black brow became a little blacker as he heard the word, but still he ignored the woman. He not only did not speak, but did not turn his eye upon her.

"They have heard the evidence on the subject," continued the bishop,

"and they have thought it proper to refer the decision as to your innocence or your guilt to a jury of your countrymen."

"And they were right," said Mr. Crawley.

"Very possibly. I don't deny it. Probably," said the bishop, whose eloquence was somewhat disturbed by Mr. Crawley's ready acquiescence.

"Of course they were right," said Mrs. Proudie.

"At any rate it is so," said the bishop. "You are in the position of a man amenable to the criminal laws of the land."

"There are no criminal laws, my lord," said Mr. Crawley; "but to such laws as there are we are all amenable,—your lordship and I alike."

"But you are so in a very particular way. I do not wish to remind you what might be your condition now, but for the interposition of private friends."

"I should be in the condition of a man not guilty before the law,—guiltless, as far as the law goes,—but kept in durance, not for faults of his own, but because otherwise, by reason of laches in the police, his presence at the assizes might not be ensured. In such a position a man's reputation is made to hang for awhile on the trust which some friends or neighbours may have in it. I do not say that the test is a good one."

"You would have been put in prison, Mr. Crawley because the magistrates were of the opinion that you had taken Mr. Soames's cheque," said Mrs. Proudie. On this occasion he did look at her. He turned one glance upon her from under his eyebrows, but he did not speak.

"With all that I have nothing to do," said the bishop.

"Nothing whatever, my lord," said Mr. Crawley.

"But, bishop, I think that you have," said Mrs. Proudie. "The judgment formed by the magistrates as to the conduct of one of your clergymen makes it imperative upon you to act in the matter."

"Yes, my dear, yes; I am coming to that. What Mrs. Proudie says is perfectly true. I have been constrained most unwillingly to take action in this matter. It is undoubtedly the fact that you must at the next assizes surrender yourself at the court-house yonder, to be tried for this offence against the laws."

"That is true. If I be alive, my lord, and have strength sufficient, I shall be there."

"You must be there," said Mrs. Proudie. "The police will look to that, Mr. Crawley." She was becoming very angry in that the man

would not answer her a word. On this occasion again he did not even look at her.

"Yes; you will be there," said the bishop. "Now that is, to say the least of it, an unseemly position for a beneficed clergyman."

"You said before, my lord, that it was an unfortunate position, and the word, methinks, was better chosen."

"It is very unseemly, very unseemly indeed," said Mrs. Proudie; "nothing could possibly be more unseemly. The bishop might very properly have used a much stronger word."

"Under these circumstances," continued the bishop, "looking to the welfare of your parish, to the welfare of the diocese, and allow me to say, Mr. Crawley, to the welfare of yourself also——"

"And especially to the souls of the people," said Mrs. Proudie.

The bishop shook his head. It is hard to be impressively eloquent when one is interrupted at every best turned period, even by a supporting voice. "Yes;—and looking of course to the religious interests of your people, Mr. Crawley, I came to the conclusion that it would be expedient that you should cease your ministrations for awhile." The bishop paused, and Mr. Crawley bowed his head. "I, therefore, sent over to you a gentleman with whom I am well acquainted, Mr. Thumble, with a letter from myself, in which I endeavoured to impress upon you, without the use of any severe language, what my convictions were."

"Severe words are often the best mercy," said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had raised his hand, with his finger out preparatory to answering the bishop. But as Mrs. Proudie had spoken he dropped his finger and was silent.

"Mr. Thumble brought me back your written reply," continued the bishop, "by which I was grieved to find that you were not willing to submit yourself to my counsel in the matter."

"I was most unwilling, my lord. Submission to authority is at times a duty;—and at times opposition to authority is a duty also."

"Opposition to just authority cannot be a duty, Mr. Crawley."

"Opposition to usurped authority is an imperative duty," said Mr. Crawley.

"And who is to be the judge?" demanded Mrs. Proudie. Then there was silence for a while; when, as Mr. Crawley made no reply,

the lady repeated her question. "Will you be pleased to answer my question, sir? Who, in such a case, is to be the judge?" But Mr. Crawley did not please to answer. "The man is obstinate," said Mrs. Proudie.

"I had better proceed," said the bishop. "Mr. Thumble brought me back your reply, which grieved me greatly."

"It was contumacious and indecent," said Mrs. Proudie.

The bishop again shook his head and looked so unutterably miserable that a smile came across Mr. Crawley's face. After all, others besides himself had their troubles and trials. Mrs. Proudie saw and understood the smile, and became more angry than ever. She drew her chair close to the table, and began to fidget with her fingers among the papers. She had never before encountered a clergyman so contumacious, so indecent, so unreverend,—so upsetting. She had had to do with men difficult to manage;—the archdeacon for instance; but the archdeacon had never been so impertinent to her as this man. She had quarrelled once openly with a chaplain of her husband's, a clergyman whom she herself had introduced to her husband, and who had treated her very badly;—but not so badly, not with such unscrupulous violence, as she was now encountering from this ill-clothed beggarly man, this perpetual curate, with his dirty broken boots, this already half-convicted thief! Such was her idea of Mr. Crawley's conduct to her, while she was fingering the papers,—simply because Mr. Crawley would not speak to her.

"I forget where I was," said the bishop. "Oh. Mr. Thumble came back, and I received your letter;—of course I received it. And I was surprised to learn from that, that in spite of what had occurred at Silverbridge, you were still anxious to continue the usual Sunday ministrations in your church."

"I was determined that I would do my duty at Hogglestock as long as I might be left there to do it," said Mr. Crawley.

"Duty!" said Mrs Proudie.

"Just a moment, my dear," said the bishop. "When Sunday came, I had no alternative but to send Mr. Thumble over again to Hogglestock. It occurred to us,—to me and Mrs. Proudie,—"

"I will tell Mr. Crawley just now what has occurred to me," said Mrs. Proudie.

"Yes;—just so. And I am sure that he will take it in good part.

It occurred to me, Mr. Crawley, that your first letter might have been written in haste."

"It was written in haste, my lord; your messenger was waiting."

"Yes;—just so. Well; so I sent him again, hoping that he might be accepted as a messenger of peace. It was a most disagreeable mission for any gentleman, Mr. Crawley."

"Most disagreeable, my lord."

"And you refused him permission to obey the instructions which I had given him! You would not let him read from your desk, or preach from your pulpit."

"Had I been Mr. Thumble," said Mrs. Proudie, "I would have read from that desk and I would have preached from that pulpit."

Mr. Crawley waited a moment, thinking that the bishop might perhaps speak again; but as he did not, but sat expectant as though he had finished his discourse, and now expected a reply, Mr. Crawley got up from his seat and drew near to the table. "My lord," he began, "it has all been just as you have said. I did answer your first letter in haste."

"The more shame for you," said Mrs. Proudie.

"And therefore, for aught I know, my letter to your lordship may be so worded as to need some apology."

"Of course it needs an apology," said Mrs. Proudie.

"But for the matter of it, my lord, no apology can be made, nor is any needed. I did refuse to your messenger permission to perform the services of my church, and if you send twenty more, I shall refuse them all,—till the time may come when it will be your lordship's duty, in accordance with the laws of the Church, as borne out and backed by the laws of the land, to provide during my constrained absence for the spiritual wants of those poor people at Hogglestock."

"Poor people, indeed," said Mrs. Proudie. "Poor wretches!"

"And, my lord, it may be, that it shall soon be your lordship's duty to take due and legal steps for depriving me of my benefice at Hogglestock;—nay, probably, for silencing me altogether as to the exercise of my sacred profession!"

"Of course it will, sir. Your gown will be taken from you," said Mrs. Proudie. The bishop was looking with all his eyes up at the great forehead and great eyebrows of the man, and was so fascinated by

the power that was exercised over him by the other man's strength that he hardly now noticed his wife.

"It may well be so," continued Mr. Crawley. "The circumstances are strong against me; and, though your lordship has altogether misunderstood the nature of the duty performed by the magistrates in sending my case for trial,—although, as it seems to me, you have come to conclusions in this matter in ignorance of the very theory of our laws,——"

"Sir!" said Mrs. Proudie.

"Yet I can foresee the probability that a jury may discover me to have been guilty of theft."

"Of course the jury will do so," said Mrs. Proudie.

"Should such verdict be given, then, my lord, your interference will be legal, proper, and necessary. And you will find that, even if it be within my power to oppose obstacles to your lordship's authority, I will oppose no such obstacle. There is, I believe, no appeal in criminal cases."

"None at all," said Mrs. Proudie. "There is no appeal against your bishop. You should have learned that before."

"But till that time shall come, my lord, I shall hold my own at Hogglestock as you hold your own here at Barchester. Nor have you more power to turn me out of my pulpit by your mere voice, than I have to turn you out of your throne by mine. If you doubt me, my lord, your lordship's ecclesiastical court is open to you. Try it there."

"You defy us, then?" said Mrs. Proudie.

"My lord, I grant your authority as bishop to be great, but even a bishop can only act as the law allows him."

"God forbid that I should do more," said the bishop.

"Sir, you will find that your wicked threats will fall back upon your own head," said Mrs. Proudie.

"Peace, woman," Mr. Crawley said, addressing her at last. The bishop jumped out of his chair at hearing the wife of his bosom called a woman. But he jumped rather in admiration than in anger. He had already begun to perceive that Mr. Crawley was a man who had better be left to take care of the souls at Hogglestock, at any rate till the trial should come on.

"Woman!" said Mrs. Proudie, rising to her feet as though she really intended some personal encounter.

"Madam," said Mr. Crawley, "you should not interfere in these matters. You simply debase your husband's high office. The distaff were more fitting for you. My lord, good morning." And before either of them could speak again, he was out of the room, and through the hall, and beyond the gate, and standing beneath the towers of the cathedral. Yes, he had, he thought, crushed the bishop. He had succeeded in crumpling the bishop up within the clutch of his fist.

He started in a spirit of triumph to walk back on his road towards Hogglestock. He did not think of the long distance before him for the first hour of his journey. He had had his victory, and the remembrance of that braced his nerves and gave elasticity to his sinews, and he went stalking along the road with rapid strides, muttering to himself from time to time as he went along some word about Mrs. Proudie and her distaff. Mr. Thumble would not, he thought, come to him again,—not, at any rate, till the assizes were drawing near. And he had resolved what he would do then. When the day of his trial was near, he would himself write to the bishop, and beg that provision might be made for his church, in the event of the verdict going against him. His friend, Dean Arabin, was to be home before that time, and the idea had occurred to him of asking the dean to see to this. But the other would be the more independent course, and the better. And there was a matter as to which he was not altogether well pleased with the dean, although he was so conscious of his own peculiarities as to know that he could hardly trust himself for a judgment. But, at any rate, he would apply to the bishop,—to the bishop whom he had just left prostrate in his palace,—when the time of his trial should be close at hand.

Full of such thoughts as these he went along almost gaily, nor felt the fatigue of the road till he had covered the first five miles out of Barchester. It was nearly four o'clock, and the thick gloom of the winter evening was making itself felt. And then he began to be fatigued. He had not as yet eaten since he had left his home in the morning, and he now pulled a crust out of his pocket and leaned against a gate as he crunched it. There were still ten miles before him, and he knew that such an addition to the work he had already done would task him very severely. Farmer Mangle had told him that he would

not leave Framley Mill till five, and he had got time to reach Framley Mill by that time. But he had said that he would not return to Framley Mill, and he remembered his suspicion that his wife and farmer Mangle between them had cozened him. No; he would persevere and walk,—walk, though he should drop upon the road. He was now nearer fifty than forty years of age, and hardships as well as time had told upon him. He knew that though his strength was good for the commencement of a hard day's work, it would not hold out for him as it used to do. He knew that the last four miles in the dark night would be very sad with him. But still he persevered, endeavouring, as he went, to cherish himself with the remembrance of his triumph.

He passed the turning going down to Framley with courage, but when he came to the further turning, by which the cart would return from Framley to the Hogglestock road, he looked wistfully down the road for farmer Mangle. But farmer Mangle was still at the mill, waiting in expectation that Mr. Crawley might come to him. But the poor traveller paused here barely for a minute, and then went on, stumbling through the mud, striking his ill-covered feet against the rough stones in the dark, sweating in his weakness, almost tottering at times, and calculating whether his remaining strength would serve to carry him home. He had almost forgotten the bishop and his wife before at last he grasped the wicket gate leading to his own door.

"Oh, mamma, here is papa!"

"But where is the cart? I did not hear the wheels," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Oh, mamma, I think papa is ill." Then the wife took her drooping husband by both arms and strove to look him in the face. "He has walked all the way, and he is ill," said Jane.

"No, my dear, I am very tired, but not ill. Let me sit down, and give me some bread and tea, and I shall recover myself." Then Mrs. Crawley, from some secret hoard, got him a small modicum of spirits, and gave him meat and tea, and he was docile; and, obeying her behests, allowed himself to be taken to his bed.

"I do not think the bishop will send for me again," he said, as she tucked the clothes around him.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

WHEN Christmas morning came no emissary from the bishop appeared at Hogglestock to interfere with the ordinary performance of the day's services. "I think we need fear no further disturbance," Mr. Crawley said to his wife,—and there was no further disturbance.

On the day after his walk from Framley to Barchester, and from Barchester back to Hogglestock, Mr. Crawley had risen not much the worse for his labour, and had gradually given to his wife a full account of what had taken place. "A poor weak man," he said, speaking of the bishop. "A poor weak creature, and much to be pitied."

"I have always heard that she is a violent woman."

"Very violent, and very ignorant; and most intrusive withal."

"And you did not answer her a word?"

"At last my forbearance with her broke down, and I bade her mind her distaff."

"What;—really? Did you say those words to her?"

"Nay; as for my exact words I cannot remember them. I was thinking more of the words with which it might be fitting that I should answer the bishop. But I certainly told her that she had better mind her distaff."

"And how did she behave then?"

"I did not wait to see. The bishop had spoken, and I had replied; and why should I tarry to behold the woman's violence? I had told him that he was wrong in law, and that I at least would not submit to usurped authority. There was nothing to keep me longer, and so I went without much ceremony of leave-taking. There had been little ceremony of greeting on their part, and there was less in the making of adieux on mine. They had told me that I was a thief——"

"No, Josiah,—surely not so? They did not use that very word?"

"I say they did;—they did use the very word. But stop. I am wrong. I wrong his lordship, and I crave pardon for having done so. If my memory serve me, no expression so harsh escaped from the bishop's mouth. He gave me, indeed, to understand more than once that the action taken by the magistrates was tantamount to a conviction, and that I must be guilty because they had decided that there was evidence sufficient to justify a trial. But all that arose from my lord's ignorance of the administration of the laws of his country. He was very ignorant,—puzzle-pated, as you may call it,—led by the nose by his wife, weak as water, timid, and vacillating. But he did not wish, I think, to be insolent. It was Mrs. Proudie who told me to my face that I was a—thief."

"May she be punished for the cruel word!" said Mrs. Crawley. "May the remembrance that she has spoken it come, some day, heavily upon her heart!"

"'Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord,'" answered Mr. Crawley. "We may safely leave all that alone, and rid our minds of such wishes, if it be possible. It is well, I think, that violent offences, when committed, should be met by instant rebuke. To turn the other cheek instantly to the smiter can hardly be suitable in these days, when the hands of so many are raised to strike. But the return blow should be given only while the smart remains. She hurt me then; but what is it to me now, that she called me a thief to my face? Do I not know that, all the country round, men and women are calling me the same behind my back?"

"No, Josiah, you do not know that. They say that the thing is very strange,—so strange that it requires a trial; but no one thinks you have taken that which was not your own."

"I think I did. I myself think I took that which was not my own. My poor head suffers so;—so many grievous thoughts distract me, that I am like a child, and know not what I do." As he spoke thus he put both hands up to his head, leaning forward as though in anxious thought,—as though he were striving to bring his mind to bear with accuracy upon past events. "It could not have been mine, and yet——" Then he sat silent, and made no effort to continue his speech.

"And yet?"—said his wife, encouraging him to proceed. If she could only learn the real truth, she thought that she might perhaps yet save him, with assistance from their friends.

"When I said that I had gotten it from that man I must have been mad."

"From which man, love?"

"From the man Soames,—he who accuses me. And yet, as the Lord hears me, I thought so then. The truth is, that there are times when I am not—sane. I am not a thief,—not before God; but I am —mad at times." These last words he spoke very slowly, in a whisper, —without any excitement,—indeed with a composure which was horrible to witness. And what he said was the more terrible because she was so well convinced of the truth of his words. Of course he was no thief. She wanted no one to tell her that. As he himself had expressed it, he was no thief before God, however the money might have come into his possession. That there were times when his reason, once so fine and clear, could not act, could not be trusted to guide him right, she had gradually come to know with fear and trembling. But he himself had never before hinted his own consciousness of this calamity. Indeed he had been so unwilling to speak of himself and of his own state, that she had been unable even to ask him a question about the money,—lest he should suspect that she suspected him. Now he was speaking,—but speaking with such heart-rending sadness that she could hardly urge him to go on.

"You have sometimes been ill, Josiah, as any of us may be," she said, "and that has been the cause."

"There are different kinds of sickness. There is sickness of the body, and sickness of the heart, and sickness of the spirit;—and then there is sickness of the mind, the worst of all."

"With you, Josiah, it has chiefly been the first."

"With me, Mary, it has been all of them,—every one! My spirit is broken, and my mind has not been able to keep its even tenour amidst the ruins. But I will strive. I will strive. I will strive still. And if God helps me, I will prevail." Then he took up his hat and cloak, and went forth among the lanes; and on this occasion his wife was glad that he should go alone.

This occurred a day or two before Christmas, and Mrs. Crawley during those days said nothing more to her husband on the subject which he had so unexpectedly discussed. She asked him no questions about the money, or as to the possibility of his exercising his memory, nor did she counsel him to plead that the false excuses given by him

for his possession of the cheque had been occasioned by the sad slip to which sorrow had in those days subjected his memory and his intellect. But the matter had always been on her mind. Might it not be her paramount duty to do something of this at the present moment? Might it not be that his acquittal or conviction would depend on what she might now learn from him? It was clear to her that he was brighter in spirit since his encounter with the Proudies than he had ever been since the accusation had been first made against him. And she knew well that his present mood would not be of long continuance. He would fall again into his moody silent ways, and then the chance of learning aught from him would be past, and, perhaps, for ever.

He performed the Christmas services with nothing of special despondency in his tone or manner, and his wife thought that she had never heard him give the sacrament with more impressive dignity. After the service he stood awhile at the churchyard gate, and exchanged a word of courtesy as to the season with such of the families of the farmers as had stayed for the Lord's Supper.

"I waited at Framley for your reverence till arter six,—so I did," said farmer Mangle.

"I kept the road, and walked the whole way," said Mr. Crawley. "I think I told you that I should not return to the mill. But I am not the less obliged by your great kindness."

"Say nowt o that," said the farmer. "No doubt I had business at the mill,—lots to do at the mill." Nor did he think that the fib he was telling was at all incompatible with the Holy Sacrament in which he had just taken a part.

The Christmas dinner at the parsonage was not a repast that did much honour to the season, but it was a better dinner than the inhabitants of that house usually saw on the board before them. There was roast-pork, and mince-pies, and a bottle of wine. As Mrs. Crawley with her own hand put the meat upon the table, and then, as was her custom in their house, proceeded to cut it up, she loooked at her husband's face to see whether he was scrutinizing the food with painful eye. It was better that she should tell the truth at once than that she should be made to tell it, in answer to a question. Everything on the table, except the bread and potatoes, had come in a basket from Framley Court. Pork had been sent instead of beef, because people in the country, when they kill their pigs, do sometimes give each other

pork,—but do not exchange joints of beef, when they slay their oxen. All this was understood by Mrs. Crawley, but she almost wished that beef had been sent, because beef would have attracted less attention. He said, however, nothing to the meat; but when his wife proposed to him that he should eat a mince-pie he resented it. "The bare food," said he, "is bitter enough, coming as it does; but that would choke me." She did not press it, but eat one herself, as otherwise her girl would have been forced also to refuse the dainty.

That evening, as soon as Jane was in bed, she resolved to ask him some further questions. "You will have a lawyer, Josiah,—will you not?" she said.

"Why should I have a lawyer?"

"Because he will know what questions to ask, and how questions on the other side should be answered."

"I have no questions to ask, and there is only one way in which questions should be answered. I have no money to pay a lawyer."

"But, Josiah, in such a case as this, where your honour and our very life depend upon it——"

"Depend on what?"

"On your acquittal."

"I shall not be acquitted. It is as well to look it in the face at once. Lawyer, or no lawyer, they will say that I took the money. Were I upon the jury, trying the case myself, knowing all that I know now,"—and as he said this he struck forth with his hands into the air,—"I think that I should say so myself. A lawyer will do no good. It is here. It is here." And again he put his hands up to his head.

So far she had been successful. At this moment it had in truth been her object to induce him to speak of his own memory, and not of the aid that a lawyer might give. The proposition of the lawyer had been brought in to introduce the subject.

"But, Josiah——"

"Well?"

It was very hard for her to speak. She could not bear to torment him by any allusion to his own deficiencies. She could not endure to make him think that she suspected him of any frailty either in intellect or thought. Wifelike, she desired to worship him, and that he should know that she worshipped him. But if a word might save him! "Josiah, where did it come from?"

"Yes," said he; "yes; that is the question. Where did it come from?"—and he turned sharp upon her, looking at her with all the power of his eyes. "It is because I cannot tell you where it came from that I ought to be,—either in Bedlam as a madman, or in the county gaol as a thief." The words were so dreadful to her that she could not utter at the moment another syllable. "How is a man,—to think himself—fit—for a man's work, when he cannot answer his wife such a plain question as that?" Then he paused again. "They should take me to Bedlam at once,—at once,—at once. That would not disgrace the children as the gaol will do."

Mrs. Crawley could ask no further questions on that evening.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT MR. WALKER THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

It had been suggested to Mr. Robarts, the parson of Framley, that he should endeavour to induce his old acquaintance, Mr. Crawley, to employ a lawyer to defend him at his trial, and Mr. Robarts had not forgotten the commission which he had undertaken. But there were difficulties in the matter of which he was well aware. In the first place Mr. Crawley was a man whom it had not at any time been easy to advise on matters private to himself; and, in the next place, this was a matter on which it was very hard to speak to the man implicated, let him be who he would. Mr. Robarts had come round to the generally accepted idea that Mr. Crawley had obtained possession of the cheque illegally,—acquitting his friend in his own mind of theft, simply by supposing that he was wool-gathering when the cheque came in his way. But in speaking to Mr. Crawley, it would be necessary,—so he thought,—to pretend a conviction that Mr. Crawley was as innocent in fact as in intention.

He had almost made up his mind to dash at the subject when he met Mr. Crawley walking through Framley to Barchester, but he had abstained, chiefly because Mr. Crawley had been too quick for him, and had got away. After that he resolved that it would be almost useless for him to go to work unless he should be provided with a lawyer ready and willing to undertake the task; and as he was not so provided at present, he made up his mind that he would go into Silverbridge and see Mr. Walker, the attorney there. Mr. Walker always advised everybody in those parts about everything, and would be sure to know what would be the proper thing to be done in this case. So Mr. Robarts got into his gig, and drove himself into Silverbridge. He drove at once to Mr. Walker's office, and on arriving there found that the attorney was not at that moment within. But Mr. Winthrop was within. Would Mr. Robarts see Mr. Winthrop? Now, seeing Mr. Winthrop was a very different thing from seeing Mr. Walker, although the two gentlemen were partners. But still Mr. Robarts said that he would see Mr. Winthrop. Perhaps Mr. Walker might return while he was there.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Robarts?" asked Mr. Winthrop. Mr. Robarts said that he had wished to see Mr. Walker about that poor fellow Crawley. "Ah, yes; very sad case! So much sadder being a clergyman, Mr. Robarts. We are really quite sorry for him;—we are indeed. We wouldn't have touched the case ourselves if we could have helped ourselves. We wouldn't indeed. But we are obliged to take all that business here. At any rate he'll get nothing but fair usage from us."

"I am sure of that. You don't know whether he has employed any lawyer as yet to defend him?"

"I can't say. We don't know, you know. I should say he had,—probably some Barchester attorney. Borleys and Bonstock in Barchester are very good people,—very good people indeed;—for that sort of business I mean, Mr. Robarts. I don't suppose they have much county property in their hands."

Mr. Robarts knew that Mr. Winthrop was a fool and that he could get no useful advice from him. So he suggested that he would take his gig down to the inn, and call again before long. "You'll find that Walker knows no more than I do about it," said Mr. Winthrop, "but of course he'll be glad to see you if he happens to come in." So Mr

Robarts went to the inn, put up his horse, and then, as he sauntered back up the street, met Mr. Walker coming out of the private door of his house.

"I've been at home all the morning," he said, "but I've had a stiff job of work on hand, and told them to say in the office that I was not in. Seen Winthrop, have you? I don't suppose he did know that I was here. The clerks often know more than the partners. About Mr. Crawley is it? Come into my dining-room, Mr. Robarts, where we shall be alone. Yes;—it is a bad case; a very bad case. The pity is that anybody should ever have said anything about it. Lord bless me, if I'd been Soames I'd have let him have the twenty pounds. Lord Lufton would never have allowed Soames to lose it."

"But Soames wanted to find out the truth."

"Yes;—that was just it. Soames couldn't bear to think that he should be left in the dark, and then, when the poor man said that Soames had paid the cheque to him in the way of business,—it was not odd that Soames' back should have been up, was it? But, Mr. Robarts, I should have thought a deal about it before I should have brought such a man as Mr. Crawley before a bench of magistrates on that charge."

"But between you and me, Mr. Walker, did he steal the money?"

"Well, Mr. Robarts, you know how I'm placed."

"Mr. Crawley is my friend, and of course I want to assist him. I was under a great obligation to Mr. Crawley once, and I wish to befriend him, whether he took the money or not. But I could act so much better if I felt sure one way or the other."

"If you ask me, I think he did take it."

"What!—stole it?"

"I think he knew it was not his own when he took it. You see I don't think he meant to use it when he took it. He perhaps had some queer idea that Soames had been hard on him, or his lordship, and that the money was fairly his due. Then he kept the cheque by him till he was absolutely badgered out of his life by the butcher up the street there. That was about the long and the short of it, Mr. Robarts."

"I suppose so. And now what had he better do?"

"Well; if you ask me—— He is in very bad health, isn't he?"

"No; I should say not. He walked to Barchester and back the other day."

"Did he? But he's very queer, isn't he?"

"Very odd mannered indeed."

"And does and says all manner of odd things?"

"I think you'd find the bishop would say so after that interview."

"Well; if it would do any good, you might have the bishop examined."

"Examined for what, Mr. Walker?"

"If you could show, you know, that Crawley has got a bee in his bonnet; that the mens sana is not there, in short;—I think you might manage to have the trial postponed."

"But then somebody must take charge of his living."

"You parsons could manage that among you;—you and the dean and the archdeacon. The archdeacon has always got half-a-dozen curates about somewhere. And then,—after the assizes, Mr. Crawley might come to his senses; and I think,—mind it's only an idea,—but I think the committal might be quashed. It would have been temporary insanity, and,—though mind I don't give my word for it,—I think he might go on and keep his living. I think so, Mr. Robarts."

"That has never occurred to me."

"No;—I daresay not. You see the difficulty is this. He's so stiff-necked,—will do nothing himself. Well, that will do for one proof of temporary insanity. The real truth is, Mr. Robarts, he is as mad as a hatter."

"Upon my word I've often thought so."

"And you wouldn't mind saying so in evidence,—would you? Well, you see, there is no helping such a man in any other way. He won't even employ a lawyer to defend him."

"That was what I had come to you about."

"I'm told he won't. Now a man must be mad who won't employ a lawyer when he wants one. You see, the point we should gain would be this,—if we tried to get him through as being a little touched in the upper story,—whatever we could do for him, we could do against his own will. The more he opposed us the stronger our case would be. He would swear he was not mad at all, and we should say that that was the greatest sign of his madness. But when I say we, of course I mean
I must not appear in it."

wish you could, Mr. Walker."

f course I can't; but that won't make any difference."

"I suppose he must have a lawyer?"

"Yes, he must have a lawyer;—or rather his friends must."

"And who should employ him, ostensibly?"

"Ah;—there's the difficulty. His wife wouldn't do it, I suppose? She couldn't do him a better turn."

"He would never forgive her. And she would never consent to act against him."

"Could you interfere?"

"If necessary, I will;—but I hardly know him well enough."

"Has he no father or mother, or uncles or aunts? He must have somebody belonging to him," said Mr. Walker.

Then it occurred to Mr. Robarts that Dean Arabin would be the proper person to interfere. Dean Arabin and Mr. Crawley had been intimate friends in early life, and Dean Arabin knew more of him than did any man, at least in those parts. All this Mr. Robarts explained to Mr. Walker, and Mr. Walker agreed with him that the services of Dean Arabin should if possible be obtained. Mr. Robarts would at once write to Dean Arabin and explain at length all the circumstances of the case. "The worst of it is, he will hardly be home in time," said Mr. Walker. "Perhaps he would come a little sooner if you were to press it?"

"But we could act in his name in his absence, I suppose?—of course with his authority?"

"I wish he could be here a month before the assizes, Mr. Robarts. It would be better."

"And in the mean time shall I say anything to Mr. Crawley, myself, about employing a lawyer?"

"I think I would. If he turns upon you, as like enough he may, and abuses you, that will help us in one way. If he should consent, and perhaps he may, that would help us in the other way. I'm told he's been over and upset the whole coach at the palace."

"I shouldn't think the bishop got much out of him," said the parson.

"I don't like Crawley the less for speaking his mind free to the bishop," said the attorney, laughing. "And he'll speak it free to you too, Mr. Robarts."

"He won't break any of my bones. Tell me, Mr. Walker, what lawyer shall I name to him?"

"You can't have a better man than Mr. Mason, up the street there."

"Winthrop proposed Borleys at Barchester."

"No, no, no. Borleys and Bonstock are capital people to push a fellow through on a charge of horse-stealing, or to squeeze a man for a little money; but they are not the people for Mr. Crawley in such a case as this. Mason is a better man; and then Mason and I know each other." In saying which Mr. Walker winked.

There was then a discussion between them whether Mr. Robarts should go at once to Mr. Mason; but it was decided at last that he should see Mr. Crawley and also write to the dean before he did so. The dean might wish to employ his own lawyer, and if so the double expense should be avoided. "Always remember, Mr. Robarts, that when you go into an attorney's office-door, you will have to pay for it, first or last. In here, you see, the dingy old mahogany, bare as it is, makes you safe. Or else it's the salt-cellar, which will not allow itself to be polluted by six-and-eightpenny considerations. But there is the other kind of tax to be paid. You must go up and see Mrs. Walker, or you won't have her help in this matter."

Mr. Walker returned to his work, either to some private den within his house, or to his office, and Mr. Robarts was taken upstairs to the drawing-room.. There he found Mrs. Walker and her daughter, and Miss Anne Prettyman, who had just looked in, full of the story of Mr. Crawley's walk to Barchester. Mr. Thumble had seen one of Dr. Tempest's curates, and had told the whole story,—he, Mr. Thumble, having heard Mrs. Proudie's version of what had occurred, and having, of course, drawn his own deductions from her premises. And it seemed that Mr. Crawley had been watched as he passed through the close out of Barchester. A minor canon had seen him, and had declared that he was going at the rate of a hunt, swinging his arms on high and speaking very loud, though,—as the minor canon said with regret,—the words were hardly audible. But there had been no doubt as to the man. Mr. Crawley's old hat, and short rusty cloak, and dirty boots, had been duly observed and chronicled by the minor canon; and Mr. Thumble had been enabled to put together a not altogether false picture of what had occurred. As soon as the greetings between Mr. Robarts and the ladies had been made, Miss Anne Prettyman broke out again, just where she had left off when Mr. Robarts came in. "They say that Mrs. Proudie declared that she will have him sent to Botany Bay!"

"Luckily Mrs. Proudie won't have much to do in the matter," said Miss Walker, who ranged herself, as to Church matters, in ranks altogether opposed to those commanded by Mrs. Proudie.

"She will have nothing to do with it, my dear," said Mrs. Walker; "and I daresay Mrs. Proudie was not foolish enough to say anything of the kind."

"Mamma, she would be fool enough to say anything. Would she not, Mr. Robarts?"

"You forget, Miss Walker, that Mrs. Proudie is in authority over me."

"So she is, for the matter of that," said the young lady; "but I know very well what you all think of her, and say of her too, at Framley. Your friend, Lady Lufton, loves her dearly. I wish I could have been hidden behind a curtain in the palace, to hear what Mr Crawley said to her."

"Mr. Smillie declares," said Miss Anne Prettyman, "that the bishop has been ill ever since. Mr. Smillie went over to his mother's at Barchester for Christmas, and took part of the cathedral duty, and we had Mr. Spooner over here in his place. So Mr. Smillie of course heard all about it. Only fancy, poor Mr. Crawley walking all the way from Hogglestock to Barchester and back;—and I am told he hardly had a shoe to his foot! Is it not a shame, Mr. Robarts?"

"I don't think it was quite so bad as you say, Miss Prettyman; but, upon the whole, I do think it is a shame. But what can we do?"

"I suppose there are tithes at Hogglestock. Why are they not given up to the church, as they ought to be?"

"My dear Miss Prettyman, that is a very large subject, and I am afraid it cannot be settled in time to relieve our poor friend from his distress." Then Mr. Robarts escaped from the ladies in Mr. Walker's house, who, as it seemed to him, were touching upon dangerous ground, and went back to the yard of the "George Inn" for his gig,—the "George and Vulture" it was properly called, and was the house in which the magistrates had sat when they committed Mr. Crawley for trial.

"Footed it every inch of the way, blowed if he didn't," the ostler was saying to a gentleman's groom, whom Mr. Robarts recognized to be the servant of his friend, Major Grantly; and Mr. Robarts knew that they also were talking about Mr. Crawley. Everybody in the county was talking about Mr. Crawley. At home, at Framley, there was no other subject of discourse. Lady Lufton, the dowager, was full

of it, being firmly convinced that Mr. Crawley was innocent, because the bishop was supposed to regard him as guilty. There had been a family conclave held at Framley Court over that basket of provisions which had been sent for the Christmas cheer of the Hogglestock parsonage, each of the three ladies, the two Lady Luftons and Mrs. Robarts, having special views of their own. How the pork had been substituted for the beef by old Lady Lufton, young Lady Lufton thinking that after all the beef would be less dangerous, and how a small turkey had been rashly suggested by Mrs. Robarts, and how certain small articles had been inserted in the bottom of the basket which Mrs. Crawley had never shown to her husband, need not here be told at length. But Mr. Robarts, as he heard the two grooms talking about Mr. Crawley, began to feel that Mr. Crawley had achieved at least celebrity.

The groom touched his hat as Mr. Robarts walked up. "Has the major returned home yet?" Mr. Robarts asked. The groom said that his master was still at Plumstead, and that he was to go over to Plumstead to fetch the major and Miss Edith in a day or two. Then Mr. Robarts got into his gig, and as he drove out of the yard he heard the words of the men as they returned to the same subject. "Footed it all the way," said one. "And yet he's a gen'leman, too," said the other. Mr. Robarts thought of this as he drove on, intending to call at Hogglestock on that very day on his way home. It was undoubtedly the fact that Mr. Crawley was recognized to be a gentleman by all who knew him, high or low, rich or poor, by those who thought well of him and by those who thought ill. These grooms who had been telling each other that this parson, who was to be tried as a thief, had been constrained to walk from Hogglestock to Barchester and back, because he could not afford to travel in any other way, and that his boots were cracked and his clothes ragged, had still known him to be a gentleman! Nobody doubted it; not even they who thought he had stolen the money. Mr. Robarts himself was certain of it, and told himself that he knew it by evidences which his own education made clear to him. But how was it that the grooms knew it? For my part I think that there are no better judges of the article than the grooms.

Thinking still of all which he had heard, Mr. Robarts found himself at Mr. Crawley's gate at Hogglestock.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. ROBARTS ON HIS EMBASSY.

MR. ROBARTS was not altogether easy in his mind as he approached Mr. Crawley's house. He was aware that the task before him was a very difficult one, and he had not confidence in himself,—that he was exactly the man fitted for the performance of such a task. He was a little afraid of Mr. Crawley, acknowledging tacitly to himself that the man had a power of ascendancy with which he would hardly be able to cope successfully. In old days he had once been rebuked by Mr. Crawley, and had been cowed by the rebuke; and though there was no touch of rancour in his heart on this account, no slightest remaining venom,—but rather increased respect and friendship,—still he was unable to overcome the remembrance of the scene in which the perpetual curate of Hogglestock had undoubtedly had the mastery of him. So, when two dogs have fought and one has conquered, the conquered dog will always show an unconscious submission to the conqueror.

He hailed a boy on the road as he drew near to the house, knowing that he would find no one at the parsonage to hold his horse for him, and was thus able without delay to walk through the garden and knock at the door. "Papa was not at home," Jane said. "Papa was at the school. But papa could certainly be summoned. She herself would run across to the school if Mr. Robarts would come in." So Mr. Robarts entered, and found Mrs. Crawley in the sitting-room. Mr. Crawley would be in directly, she said. And then, hurrying on to the subject with confused haste, in order that a word or two might be spoken before her husband came back, she expressed her thanks and his for the good things which had been sent to them at Christmas-tide.

"It's old Lady Lufton's doings," said Mr. Robarts, trying to laugh the matter over.

"I knew that it came from Framley, Mr. Robarts, and I know how good you all are there. I have not written to thank Lady Lufton. I thought it better not to write. Your sister will understand why, if no one else does. But you will tell them from me, I am sure, that it was, as they intended, a comfort to us. Your sister knows too much of us for me to suppose that our great poverty can be secret from her. And, as far as I am concerned, I do not now much care who knows it."

"There is no disgrace in not being rich," said Mr. Robarts.

"No; and the feeling of disgrace which does attach itself to being so poor as we are is deadened by the actual suffering which such poverty brings with it. At least it has become so with me. I am not ashamed to say that I am very grateful for what you all have done for us at Framley. But you must not say anything to him about that."

"Of course I will not, Mrs. Crawley."

"His spirit is higher than mine, I think, and he suffers more from the natural disinclination which we all have to receiving alms. Are you going to speak to him about this affair of the—cheque, Mr. Robarts?"

"I am going to ask him to put his case into some lawyer's hands."

"Oh! I wish he would!"

"And will he not?"

"It is very kind of you, your coming to ask him, but——"

"Has he so strong an objection?"

"He will tell you that he has no money to pay a lawyer."

"But, surely, if he were convinced that it was absolutely necessary for the vindication of his innocence, he would submit to charge himself with an expense so necessary, not only for himself, but for his family?"

"He will say it ought not to be necessary. You know, Mr. Robarts, that in some respects he is not like other men. You will not let what I say of him set you against him?"

"Indeed, no."

"It is most kind of you to make the attempt. He will be here directly, and when he comes I will leave you together."

While she was yet speaking his step was heard along the gravel-path, and he hurried into the room with quick steps. "I crave your pardon,

Mr. Robarts," he said, "that I should keep you waiting." Now Mr. Robarts had not been there ten minutes, and any such asking of pardon was hardly necessary. And, even in his own house, Mr. Crawley affected a mock humility, as though, either through his own debasement, or because of the superior station of the other clergyman, he were not entitled to put himself on an equal footing with his visitor. He would not have shaken hands with Mr. Robarts,—intending to indicate that he did not presume to do so while the present accusation was hanging over him,—had not the action been forced upon him. And then there was something of a protest in his manner, as though remonstrating against a thing that was unbecoming to him. Mr. Robarts, without analysing it, understood it all, and knew that behind the humility there was a crushing pride,—a pride which, in all probability, would rise up and crush him before he could get himself out of the room again. It was, perhaps, after all, a question whether the man was not served rightly by the extremities to which he was reduced. There was something radically wrong within him, which had put him into antagonism with all the world, and which produced these never-dying grievances. There were many clergymen in the country with incomes as small as that which had fallen to the lot of Mr. Crawley, but they managed to get on without displaying their sores as Mr. Crawley displayed his. They did not wear their old rusty cloaks with all that ostentatious bitterness of poverty which seemed to belong to that garment when displayed on Mr. Crawley's shoulders. Such, for a moment, were Mr. Robarts' thoughts, and he almost repented himself of his present mission. But then he thought of Mrs. Crawley, and remembering that her sufferings were at any rate undeserved, determined that he would persevere.

Mrs. Crawley disappeared almost as soon as her husband appeared, and Mr. Robarts found himself standing in front of his friend, who remained fixed on the spot, with his hands folded over each other and his neck slightly bent forward, in token also of humility. "I regret," he said, "that your horse should be left there, exposed to the inclemency of the weather; but——"

"The horse won't mind it a bit," said Mr. Robarts. "A parson's horse is like a butcher's, and knows that he mustn't be particular about waiting in the cold."

"I never have had one myself," said Mr. Crawley. Now Mr. Robarts

had had more horses than one before now, and had been thought by some to have incurred greater expense than was befitting in his stable comforts. The subject, therefore, was a sore one, and he was worried a little. "I just wanted to say a few words to you, Crawley," he said, "and if I am not occupying too much of your time——"

"My time is altogether at your disposal. Will you be seated?"

Then Mr. Robarts sat down, and, swinging his hat between his legs, bethought himself how he should begin his work. "We had the archdeacon over at Framley the other day," he said. "Of course you know the archdeacon?"

"I never had the advantage of any acquaintance with Dr. Grantly. Of course I know him well by name and also personally,—that is, by sight."

"And by character?"

"Nay; I can hardly say so much as that. But I am aware that his name stands high with many of his order."

"Exactly; that is what I mean. You know that his judgment is thought more of in clerical matters than that of any other clergyman in the county."

"By a certain party, Mr. Robarts."

"Well, yes. They don't think much of him, I suppose, at the palace. But that won't lower him in your estimation."

"I by no means wish to derogate from Dr. Grantly's high position in his own archdeaconry,—to which, as you are aware, I am not attached,—nor to criticize his conduct in any respect. It would be unbecoming in me to do so. But I cannot accept it as a point in a clergyman's favour, that he should be opposed to his bishop."

Now this was too much for Mr. Robarts. After all that he had heard of the visit paid by Mr. Crawley to the palace,—of the venom displayed by Mrs. Proudie on that occasion, and of the absolute want of subordination to episcopal authority which Mr. Crawley himself was supposed to have shown,—Mr. Robarts did feel it hard that his friend the archdeacon should be snubbed in this way because he was deficient in reverence for his bishop! "I thought, Crawley," he said, "that you yourself were inclined to dispute orders coming to you from the palace. The world at least says as much concerning you."

"What the world says of me I have learned to disregard very much,

Mr. Robarts. But I hope that I shall never disobey the authority of the Church when properly and legally exercised."

"I hope with all my heart you never will; nor I either. And the archdeacon, who knows, to the breadth of a hair, what a bishop ought to do and what he ought not, and what he may do and what he may not, will, I should say, be the last man in England to sin in that way."

"Very probably. I am far from contradicting you there. Pray understand, Mr. Robarts, that I bring no accusation against the archdeacon. Why should I?"

"I didn't mean to discuss him at all."

"Nor did I, Mr. Robarts."

"I only mentioned his name, because, as I said, he was over with us the other day at Framley, and we were all talking about your affair."

"My affair!" said Mr. Crawley. And then came a frown upon his brow, and a gleam of fire into his eyes, which effectually banished that look of extreme humility which he had assumed. "And may I ask why the archdeacon was discussing—my affair?"

"Simply from the kindness which he bears to you."

"I am grateful for the archdeacon's kindness, as a man is bound to be for any kindness, whether displayed wisely or unwisely. But it seems to me that my affair, as you call it, Mr. Robarts, is of that nature that they who wish well to me will better further their wishes by silence than by any discussion."

"Then I cannot agree with you." Mr. Crawley shrugged his shoulders, opened his hands a little and then closed them, and bowed his head. He could not have declared more clearly by any words that he differed altogether from Mr. Robarts, and that as the subject was one so peculiarly his own he had a right to expect that his opinion should be allowed to prevail against that of any other person. "If you come to that, you know, how is anybody's tongue to be stopped?"

"That vain tongues cannot be stopped, I am well aware. I do not expect that people's tongues should be stopped. I am not saying what men will do, but what good wishes should dictate."

"Well, perhaps you'll hear me out for a minute." Mr. Crawley again bowed his head. "Whether we were wise or unwise, we were discussing this affair."

"Whether I stole Mr. Soames's money?"

"No; nobody supposed for a moment you had stolen it."

"I cannot understand how they should suppose anything else, knowing, as they do, that the magistrates have committed me for the theft. This took place at Framley, you say, and probably in Lord Lufton's presence."

"Exactly."

"And Lord Lufton was chairman at the sitting of the magistrates at which I was committed. How can it be that he should think otherwise?"

"I am sure he has not an idea that you were guilty. Nor yet has Dr. Thorne, who was also one of the magistrates. I don't suppose one of them then thought so."

"Then their action, to say the least of it, was very strange."

"It was all because you had nobody to manage it for you. I thoroughly believe that if you had placed the matter in the hands of a good lawyer, you would never have heard a word more about it. That seems to be the opinion of everybody I speak to on the subject."

"Then in this country a man is to be punished or not, according to his ability to fee a lawyer!"

"I am not talking about punishment."

"And presuming an innocent man to have the ability and not the will to do so, he is to be punished, to be ruined root and branch, self and family, character and pocket, simply because, knowing his own innocence, he does not choose to depend on the mercenary skill of a man whose trade he abhors for the establishment of that which should be clear as the sun at noon-day! You say I am innocent, and yet you tell me I am to be condemned as a guilty man, have my gown taken from me, be torn from my wife and children, be disgraced before the eyes of all men, and be made a byword and a thing horrible to be mentioned, because I will not fee an attorney to fee another man to come and lie on my behalf, to browbeat witnesses, to make false appeals, and perhaps shed false tears in defending me. You have come to me asking me to do this, if I understand you, telling me that the archdeacon would so advise me?"

"That is my object." Mr. Crawley, as he had spoken, had in his vehemence risen from his seat, and Mr. Robarts was also standing.

"Then tell the archdeacon," said Mr. Crawley, "that I will have none of his advice. I will have no one there paid by me to obstruct the course of justice or to hoodwink a jury. I have been in courts of law, and know what is the work for which these gentlemen are hired. I will have none of it, and I will thank you to tell the archdeacon so, with my respectful acknowledgments of his consideration and condescension. I say nothing as to my own innocence, or my own guilt. But I do say that if I am dragged before that tribunal, an innocent man, and am falsely declared to be guilty, because I lack money to bribe a lawyer to speak for me, then the laws of this country deserve but little of that reverence which we are accustomed to pay to them. And if I be guilty——"

"Nobody supposes you to be guilty."

"And if I be guilty," continued Mr. Crawley, altogether ignoring the interruption, except by the repetition of his words, and a slight raising of his voice, "I will not add to my guilt by hiring any one to prove a falsehood or to disprove a truth."

"I'm sorry that you should say so, Mr. Crawley."

"I speak according to what light I have, Mr. Robarts; and if I have been over-warm with you,—and I am conscious that I have been in fault in that direction,—I must pray you to remember that I am somewhat hardly tried. My sorrows and troubles are so great that they rise against me and disturb me, and drive me on,—whither I would not be driven."

"But, my friend, is not that just the reason why you should trust in this matter to some one who can be more calm than yourself?"

"I cannot trust to any one,—in a matter of conscience. To do as you would have me is to me wrong. Shall I do wrong because I am unhappy?"

"You should cease to think it wrong when so advised by persons you can trust."

"I can trust no one with my own conscience;—not even the archdeacon, great as he is."

"The archdeacon has meant only well to you."

"I will presume so. I will believe so. I do think so. Tell the archdeacon from me that I humbly thank him;—that, in a matter of church question, I might probably submit my judgment to his, even though he might have no authority over me, knowing as I do that in

such matters his experience has been great. Tell him also, that though I would fain that this unfortunate affair might burden the tongue of none among my neighbours,—at least till I shall have stood before the judge to receive the verdict of the jury, and, if needful, his lordship's sentence,—still I am convinced that in what he has spoken, as also in what he has done, he has not yielded to the idleness of gossip, but has exercised his judgment with intended kindness."

"He has certainly intended to do you a service; and as for its not being talked about, that is out of the question."

"And for yourself, Mr. Robarts, whom I have ever regarded as a friend since circumstances brought me into your neighbourhood,—for you, whose sister I love tenderly in memory of past kindness, though now she is removed so far above my sphere as to make it unfit that I should call her my friend——"

"She does not think so at all."

"For yourself, as I was saying, pray believe me that though from the roughness of my manner, being now unused to social intercourse, I seem to be ungracious and forbidding, I am grateful and mindful, and that in the tablets of my heart I have written you down as one in whom I could trust,—were it given to me to trust in men and women." Then he turned round with his face to the wall and his back to his visitor, and so remained till Mr. Robarts had left him. "At any rate I wish you well through your trouble," said Robarts; and as he spoke he found that his own words were nearly choked by a sob that was rising in his throat.

He went away without another word and got out to his gig without seeing Mrs. Crawley. During one period of the interview he had been very angry with the man,—so angry as to make him almost declare to himself that he would take no more trouble on his behalf. Then he had been brought to acknowledge that Mr. Walker was right, and that Crawley was certainly mad. He was so mad, so far removed from the dominion of sound sense, that no jury could say that he was guilty and that he ought to be punished for his guilt. And, as he so resolved, he could not but ask himself the question, whether the charge of the parish ought to be left in the hands of such a man? But at last, just before he went, these feelings and these convictions gave way to pity, and he remembered simply the troubles which seemed to have been heaped on the head of this poor victim to misfortune. As he drove

home he resolved that there was nothing left for him to do but to write to the dean. It was known to all who knew them both, that the dean and Mr. Crawley had lived together on the closest intimacy at college, and that that friendship had been maintained through life;—though, from the peculiarity of Mr. Crawley's character, the two had not been much together of late years. Seeing how things were going now, and hearing how pitiful was the plight in which Mr. Crawley was placed, the dean would, no doubt, feel it to be his duty to hasten his return to England. He was believed to be at this moment in Jerusalem, and it would be long before a letter could reach him; but there still wanted three months to the assizes, and his return might be probably effected before the end of February.

"I never was so distressed in my life," Mark Robarts said to his wife.

"And you think you have done no good?"

"Only this, that I have convinced myself that the poor man is not responsible for what he does, and that for her sake, as well as for his own, some person should be enabled to interfere for his protection." Then he told Mrs. Robarts what Mr. Walker had said; also the message which Mr. Crawley had sent to the archdeacon. But they both agreed that that message need not be sent on any further.

CHAPTER XXII.

MAJOR GRANTLY AT HOME.

Mrs. Thorne had spoken very plainly in the advice which she had given to Major Grantly. "If I were you, I'd be at Allington before twelve o'clock to-morrow." That had been Mrs. Thorne's advice; and though Major Grantly had no idea of making the journey so rapidly as the lady had proposed, still he thought that he would make it before long,

and follow the advice in spirit if not to the letter. Mrs. Thorne had asked him if it was fair that the girl should be punished because of the father's fault; and the idea had been sweet to him that the infliction or non-infliction of such punishment should be in his hands. "You go and ask her," Mrs. Thorne had said. Well;—he would go and ask her. If it should turn out at last that he had married the daughter of a thief, and that he was disinherited for doing so,—an arrangement of circumstances which he had to teach himself to regard as very probable,—he would not love Grace the less on that account, or allow himself for one moment to repent what he had done. As he thought of all this he became somewhat in love with a small income, and imagined to himself what honours would be done to him by the Mrs. Thornes of the county when they should come to know in what way he had sacrificed himself to his love. Yes;—they would go and live at Pau. He thought Pau would do. He would have enough of income for that;—and Edith would get lessons cheaply, and would learn to talk French fluently. He certainly would do it. He would go down to Allington, and ask Grace to be his wife; and bid her understand that if she loved him she could not be justified in refusing him by the circumstances of her father's position.

But he must go to Plumstead before he could go to Allington. He was engaged to spend his Christmas there, and must go now at once. There was not time for the journey to Allington before he was due at Plumstead. And, moreover, though he could not bring himself to resolve that he would tell his father what he was going to do,—"It would seem as though I were asking his leave!" he said to himself,—he thought that he would make a clean breast of it to his mother. It made him sad to think that he should cut the rope which fastened his own boat among the other boats in the home harbour at Plumstead, and that he should go out all alone into strange waters,—turned adrift altogether, as it were, from the Grantly fleet. If he could only get the promise of his mother's sympathy for Grace it would be something. He understood,—no one better than he,—the tendency of all his family to an uprising in the world, which tendency was almost as strong in his mother as in his father. And he had been by no means without a similar ambition himself, though with him the ambition had been only fitful, not enduring. He had a brother, a clergyman, a busy, stirring, eloquent London preacher, who got churches built, and was heard of

far and wide as a rising man, who had married a certain Lady Anne, the daughter of an earl, and who was already mentioned as a candidate for high places. How his sister was the wife of a marquis, and a leader in the fashionable world, the reader already knows. The archdeacon himself was a rich man, so powerful that he could afford to look down upon a bishop; and Mrs. Grantly, though there was left about her something of an old softness of nature, a touch of the former life which had been hers before the stream of her days had run gold, yet she, too, had taken kindly to wealth and high standing, and was by no means one of those who construe literally that passage of Scripture which tells us of the camel and the needle's eye. Our Henry Grantly, our major, knew himself to be his mother's favourite child,—knew himself to have become so since something of coolness had grown up between her and her august daughter. The augustness of the daughter had done much to reproduce the old freshness of which I have spoken in the mother's heart, and had specially endeared to her the son who, of all her children, was the least subject to the family failing. The clergyman, Charles Grantly,—he who had married the Lady Anne,—was his father's darling in these days. The old archdeacon would go up to London and be quite happy in his son's house. He met there the men whom he loved to meet, and heard the talk which he loved to hear. It was very fine having the Marquis of Hartletop for a son-in-law, but he had never cared to be much at Lady Hartletop's house. Indeed, the archdeacon cared to be in no house in which those around him were supposed to be bigger than himself. Such was the family fleet from out of which Henry Grantly was now proposing to sail alone with his little boat,—taking Grace Crawley with him at the helm. "My father is a just man at the bottom," he said to himself, "and though he may not forgive me, he will not punish Edith."

But there was still left one of the family,—not a Grantly, indeed, but one so nearly allied to them as to have his boat moored in the same harbour,—who, as the major well knew, would thoroughly sympathize with him. This was old Mr. Harding, his mother's father,—the father of his mother and of his aunt Mrs. Arabin,—whose home was now at the deanery. He was also to be at Plumstead during this Christmas, and he at any rate would give a ready assent to such a marriage as that which the major was proposing for himself. But then poor old Mr. Harding had been thoroughly deficient in that ambition which had

served to aggrandize the family into which his daughter had married. He was a poor old man who, in spite of good friends,—for the late bishop of the diocese had been his dearest friend,—had never risen high in his profession, and had fallen even from the moderate altitude which he had attained. But he was a man whom all loved who knew him; and it was much to the credit of his son-in-law, the archdeacon, that, with all his tendencies to love rising suns, he had ever been true to Mr. Harding.

Major Grantly took his daughter with him, and on his arrival at Plumstead she of course was the first object of attention. Mrs. Grantly declared that she had grown immensely. The archdeacon complimented her red cheeks, and said that Cosby Lodge was as healthy a place as any in the county, while Mr. Harding, Edith's great-grandfather, drew slowly from his pocket sundry treasures with which he had come prepared for the delight of the little girl. Charles Grantly and Lady Anne had no children, and the heir of all the Hartletops was too august to have been trusted to the embraces of his mother's grandfather. Edith, therefore, was all that he had in that generation, and of Edith he was prepared to be as indulgent as he had been, in their time, of his grandchildren the Grantlys, and still was of his grandchildren the Arabins, and had been before that of his own daughters. "She's more like Eleanor than any one else," said the old man in a plaintive tone. Now Eleanor was Mrs. Arabin, the dean's wife, and was at this time,—if I were to say over forty I do not think I should be uncharitable. No one else saw the special likeness, but no one else remembered, as Mr. Harding did, what Eleanor had been when she was three years old.

"Aunt Nelly is in France," said the child.

"Yes, my darling, aunt Nelly is in France, and I wish she were at home. Aunt Nelly has been away a long time."

"I suppose she'll stay till the dean picks her up on his way home?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"So she says in her letters. I heard from her yesterday, and I brought the letter, as I thought you'd like to see it." Mrs. Grantly took the letter and read it, while her father still played with the child. The archdeacon and the major were standing together on the rug discussing the shooting at Chaldicotes, as to which the archdeacon had a strong opinion. "I'm quite sure that a man with a place like that does more good by preserving than by leaving it alone. The better

head of game he has the richer the county will be generally. It is just the same with pheasants as it is with sheep and bullocks. A pheasant doesn't cost more than he's worth any more than a barn-door fowl. Besides, a man who preserves is always respected by the poachers, and the man who doesn't is not."

"There's something in that, sir, certainly," said the major.

"More than you think for, perhaps. Look at poor Sowerby, who went on there for years without a shilling. How he was respected, because he lived as the people around him expected a gentleman to live. Thorne will have a bad time of it if he tries to change things."

"Only think," exclaimed Mrs. Grantly, "when Eleanor wrote she had not heard of that affair of poor Mr. Crawley's?"

"Does she say anything about him?" asked the major.

"I'll read what she says. 'I see in Galignani that a clergyman in Barsetshire has been committed for theft. Pray tell me who it is. Not the bishop, I hope, for the credit of the diocese?'"

"I wish it were," said the archdeacon.

"For shame, my dear," said his wife.

"No shame at all. If we are to have a thief among us, I'd sooner find him in a bad man than a good one. Besides, we should have a change at the palace, which would be a great thing."

"But is it not odd that Eleanor should have heard nothing of it?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"It's odd that you should not have mentioned it yourself."

"I did not, certainly; nor you, papa, I suppose?"

Mr. Harding acknowledged that he had not spoken of it, and then they calculated that perhaps she might not have received any letter from her husband written since the news had reached him. "Besides, why should he have mentioned it?" said the major. "He only knows as yet of the inquiry about the cheque, and can have heard nothing of what was done by the magistrates."

"Still it seems so odd that Eleanor should not have known of it, seeing that we have been talking of nothing else for the last week," said Mrs. Grantly.

For two days the major said not a word of Grace Crawley to any one. Nothing could be more courteous and complaisant than was his father's conduct to him. Anything that he wanted for Edith was to be done. For himself there was no trouble which would not be taken.

His hunting, and his shooting, and his fishing seemed to have become matters of paramount consideration to his father. And then the archdeacon became very confidential about money matters,—not offering anything to his son, which, as he well knew, would have been seen through as palpable bribery and corruption,—but telling him of this little scheme and of that, of one investment and of another;—how he contemplated buying a small property here, and spending a few thousands on building there. "Of course it is all for you and your brother," said the archdeacon, with that benevolent sadness which is used habitually by fathers on such occasions; "and I like you to know what it is that I am doing. I told Charles about the London property the last time I was up," said the archdeacon, "and there shall be no difference between him and you, if all goes well." This was very good-natured on the archdeacon's part, and was not strictly necessary, as Charles was the eldest son; but the major understood it perfectly. "There shall be an elysium opened to you, if only you will not do that terrible thing of which you spoke when last here." The archdeacon uttered no such words as these, and did not even allude to Grace Crawley; but the words were as good as spoken, and had they been spoken ever so plainly the major could not have understood them more clearly. He was quite awake to the loveliness of the elysium opened before him. He had had his moment of anxiety, whether his father would or would not make an elder son of his brother Charles. The whole thing was now put before him plainly. Give up Grace Crawley, and you shall share alike with your brother. Disgrace yourself by marrying her, and your brother shall have everything. There was the choice, and it was still open to him to take which side he pleased. Were he never to go near Grace Crawley again no one would blame him, unless it were Miss Prettyman or Mrs. Thorne. "Fill your glass, Henry," said the archdeacon. "You'd better, I tell you, for there is no more of it left." Then the major filled his glass and sipped the wine, and swore to himself that he would go down to Allington at once. What! Did his father think to bribe him by giving him '20 port? He would certainly go down to Allington, and he would tell his mother to-morrow morning, or certainly on the next day, what he was going to do. "Pity it should be all gone; isn't it, sir?" said the archdeacon to his father-in-law. "It has lasted my time," said Mr. Harding, "and I'm very much obliged to it. Dear, dear; how well I remember your father giving

the order for it! There were two pipes, and somebody said it was a heady wine. 'If the prebendaries and rectors can't drink it,' said your father, 'the curates will.'"

"Curates indeed!" said the archdeacon. "It's too good for a bishop, unless one of the right sort."

"Your father used to say those things, but with him the poorer the guest the better the cheer. When he had a few clergymen round him, how he loved to make them happy!"

"Never talked shop to them, did he?" said the archdeacon.

"Not after dinner, at any rate. Goodness gracious, when one thinks of it! Do you remember how we used to play cards?"

"Every night regularly;—threepenny points, and sixpence on the rubber," said the archdeacon.

"Dear, dear! How things are changed! And I remember when the clergymen did more of the dancing in Barchester than all the other young men in the city put together."

"And a good set they were;—gentlemen every one of them. It's well that some of them don't dance now;—that is, for the girls' sake."

"I sometimes sit and wonder," said Mr. Harding, "whether your father's spirit ever comes back to the old house and sees the changes,—and if so whether he approves them."

"Approves them!" said the archdeacon.

"Well;—yes. I think he would, upon the whole. I'm sure of this; he would not disapprove, because the new ways are changed from his ways. He never thought himself infallible. And do you know, my dear, I am not sure that it isn't all for the best. I sometimes think that some of us were very idle when we were young. I was, I know."

"I worked hard enough," said the archdeacon.

"Ah, yes; you. But most of us took it very easily. Dear, dear! When I think of it, and see how hard they work now, and remember what pleasant times we used to have,—I don't feel sometimes quite sure."

"I believe the work was done a great deal better than it is now," said the archdeacon. "There wasn't so much fuss, but there was more reality. And men were men, and clergymen were gentlemen."

"Yes;—they were gentlemen."

"Such a creature as that old woman at the palace couldn't have

held his head up among us. That's what has come from Reform. A reformed House of Commons makes Lord Brock Prime Minister, and then your Prime Minister makes Dr. Proudie a bishop! Well;—it will last my time, I suppose."

"It has lasted mine,—like the wine," said Mr. Harding.

"There's one glass more, and you shall have it, sir." Then Mr. Harding drank the last glass of the 1820 port, and they went into the drawing-room.

On the next morning after breakfast the major went out for a walk by himself. His father had suggested to him that he should go over to shoot at Framley, and had offered him the use of everything the archdeaconry possessed in the way of horses, dogs, guns, and carriages. But the major would have none of these things. He would go out and walk by himself. "He's not thinking of her; is he?" said the archdeacon to his wife, in a whisper. "I don't know. I think he is," said Mrs. Grantly. "It will be so much the better for Charles, if he does," said the archdeacon grimly; and the look of his face as he spoke was by no means pleasant. "You will do nothing unjust, archdeacon," said his wife. "I will do as I like with my own," said he. And then he also went out and took a walk by himself.

That evening after dinner, there was no 1820 port, and no recollections of old days. They were rather dull, the three of them, as they sat together,—and dulness is always more unendurable than sadness. Old Mr. Harding went to sleep and the archdeacon was cross. "Henry," he said, "you haven't a word to throw to a dog." "I've got rather a headache this evening, sir," said the major. The archdeacon drank two glasses of wine, one after another, quickly. Then he woke his father-in-law gently, and went off. "Is there anything the matter?" asked the old man. "Nothing particular. My father seems to be a little cross." "Ah! I've been to sleep and I oughtn't. It's my fault. We'll go in and smooth him down." But the archdeacon wouldn't be smoothed down on that occasion. He would let his son see the difference between a father pleased, and a father displeased, — or rather between a father pleasant, and a father unpleasant. "He hasn't said anything to you, has he?" said the archdeacon that night to his wife. "Not a word; — as yet." "If he does it without the courage to tell us, I shall think him a cur," said the archdeacon. "But he did tell you," said Mrs. Grantly, standing up for her favourite son; "and, for

the matter of that, he has courage enough for anything. If he does it, I shall always say that he has been driven to it by your threats."

"That's sheer nonsense," said the archdeacon.

"It's not nonsense at all," said Mrs. Grantly.

"Then I suppose I was to hold my tongue and say nothing?" said the archdeacon; and as he spoke he banged the door between his dressing-room and Mrs. Grantly's bed-room.

On the first day of the new year Major Grantly spoke his mind to his mother. The archdeacon had gone into Barchester, having in vain attempted to induce his son to go with him. Mr. Harding was in the library reading a little and sleeping a little, and dreaming of old days and old friends, and perhaps, sometimes, of the old wine. Mrs. Grantly was alone in a small sitting-room which she frequented up-stairs, when suddenly her son entered the room. "Mother," he said, "I think it better to tell you that I am going to Allington."

"To Allington, Henry?" She knew very well who was at Allington, and what must be the business which would take him there.

"Yes, mother. Miss Crawley is there, and there are circumstances which make it incumbent on me to see her without delay."

"What circumstances, Henry?"

"As I intend to ask her to be my wife I think it best to do so now. I owe it to her and to myself that she should not think that I am deterred by her father's position."

"But would it not be reasonable that you should be deterred by her father's position?"

"No, I think not. I think it would be dishonest as well as ungenerous. I cannot bring myself to brook such delay. Of course I am alive to the misfortune which has fallen upon her,—upon her and me, too, should she ever become my wife. But it is one of those burdens which a man should have shoulders broad enough to bear."

"Quite so, if she were your wife, or even if you were engaged to her. Then honour would require it of you, as well as affection. As it is, your honour does not require it, and I think you should hesitate, for all our sakes, and especially for Edith's."

"It will do Edith no harm; and, mother, if you alone were concerned, I think you would feel that it would not hurt you."

"I was not thinking of myself, Henry."

"As for my father, the very threats which he has used make me conscious that I have only to measure the price. He has told me that he will stop my allowance."

"But that may not be the worst. Think how you are situated. You are the younger son of a man who who will be held to be justified in making an elder son, if he thinks fit to do so."

"I can only hope that he will be fair to Edith. If you will tell him that from me, it is all that I will ask you to do."

"But you will see him yourself?"

"No, mother; not till I have been to Allington. Then I will see him again or not, just as he pleases. I shall stop at Guestwick, and will write to you a line from thence. If my father decides on doing anything, let me know at once, as it will be necessary that I should get rid of the lease of my house."

"Oh, Henry!"

"I have thought a great deal about it, mother, and I believe I am right. Whether I am right or wrong, I shall do it. I will not ask you now for any promise or pledge; but should Miss Crawley become my wife, I hope that you at least will not refuse to see her as your daughter." Having so spoken, he kissed his mother, and was about to leave the room; but she held him by his arm, and he saw that her eyes were full of tears. "Dearest mother, if I grieve you I am sorry indeed."

"Not me, not me, not me," she said.

"For my father, I cannot help it. Had he not threatened me I should have told him also. As he has done so, you must tell him. But give him my kindest love."

"Oh, Henry; you will be ruined. You will, indeed. Can you not wait? Remember how headstrong your father is, and yet how good; —and how he loves you! Think of all that he has done for you. When did he refuse you anything?"

"He has been good to me, but in this I cannot obey him. He should not ask me."

"You are wrong. You are indeed. He has a right to expect that you will not bring disgrace upon the family."

"Nor will I;—except such disgrace as may attend upon poverty. Good-bye, mother. I wish you could have said one kind word to me."

"Have I not said a kind word?"

"Not as yet, mother."

"I would not for worlds speak unkindly to you. If it were not for your father I would bid you bring whom you pleased home to me as your wife; and I would be as a mother to her. And if this girl should become your wife—"

"It shall not be my fault if she does not."

"I will try to love her—some day."

Then the major went, leaving Edith at the rectory, as requested by his mother. His own dog-cart and his servant were at Plumstead, and he drove himself home to Cosby Lodge.

When the archdeacon returned the news was told him at once. "Henry has gone to Allington to propose to Miss Crawley," said Mrs. Grantly.

"Gone,—without speaking to me!"

"He left his love, and said that it was useless his remaining, as he knew he should only offend you."

"He has made his bed, and he must lie upon it," said the archdeacon. And then there was not another word said about Grace Crawley on that occasion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISS LILY DALE'S RESOLUTION.

THE ladies at the Small House at Allington breakfasted always at nine,—a liberal nine; and the postman whose duty it was to deliver letters in that village at half-past eight, being also liberal in his ideas as to time, always arrived punctually in the middle of breakfast, so that Mrs. Dale expected her letters, and Lily hers, just before their second cup of tea, as though the letters formed a part of the morning meal. Jane, the maidservant, always brought them in, and handed

them to Mrs. Dale,—for Lily had in these days come to preside at the breakfast-table; and then there would be an examination of the outsides before the envelopes were violated, and as each knew pretty well all the circumstances of the correspondence of the other, there would be some guessing as to what this or that epistle might contain; and after that a reading out loud of passages, and not infrequently of the entire letter. But now, at the time of which I am speaking, Grace Crawley was at the Small House, and therefore the common practice was somewhat in abeyance.

On one of the first days of the new year Jane brought in the letters as usual, and handed them to Mrs. Dale. Lily was at the time occupied with the teapot, but still she saw the letters, and had not her hands so full as to be debarred from the expression of her usual anxiety. "Mamma, I'm sure I see two there for me," she said. "Only one for you, Lily," said Mrs. Dale. Lily instantly knew from the tone of the voice that some letter had come, which by the very aspect of the handwriting had disturbed her mother. "There is one for you, my dear," said Mrs. Dale, throwing a letter across the table to Grace. "And one for you, Lily, from Bell. The others are for me." "And whom are yours from, mamma?" asked Lily. "One is from Mrs. Jones; the other, I think, is a letter on business." Then Lily said nothing further, but she observed that her mother only opened one of her letters at the breakfast-table. Lily was very patient;—not by nature, I think, but by exercise and practice. She had once, in her life, been too much in a hurry; and having then burned herself grievously, she now feared the fire. She did not therefore follow her mother after breakfast, but sat with Grace over the fire, hemming diligently at certain articles of clothing which were intended for use in the Hogglestock parsonage. The two girls were making a set of new shirts for Mr. Crawley. "But I know he will ask where they come from," said Grace; "and then mamma will be scolded." "But I hope he'll wear them," said Lily. "Sooner or later he will," said Grace; "because mamma manages generally to have her way at last." Then they went on for an hour or so, talking about the home affairs at Hogglestock. But during the whole time Lily's mind was intent upon her mother's letter.

Nothing was said about it at lunch, and nothing when they walked out after lunch, for Lily was very patient. But during the walk Mrs.

Dale became aware that her daughter was uneasy. These two watched each other unconsciously with a closeness which hardly allowed a glance of the eye, certainly not a tone of the voice, to pass unobserved. To Mrs. Dale it was everything in the world that her daughter should be, if not happy at heart, at least tranquil; and to Lily, who knew that her mother was always thinking of her, and of her alone, her mother was the only human divinity now worthy of adoration. But nothing was said about the letter during the walk.

When they came home it was nearly dusk, and it was their habit to sit up for a while without candles, talking, till the evening had in truth set in and the unmistakable and enforced idleness of remaining without candles was apparent. During this time, Lily, demanding patience of herself all the while, was thinking what she would do, or rather what she would say, about the letter. That nothing could be done or said in the presence of Grace Crawley was a matter of course, nor would she do or say anything to get rid of Grace. She would be very patient; but she would, at last, ask her mother about the letter.

And then, as luck would have it, Grace Crawley got up and left the room. Lily still waited for a few minutes, and, in order that her patience might be thoroughly exercised, she said a word or two about her sister Bell; how the eldest child's whooping-cough was nearly well, and how the baby was doing wonderful things with its first tooth. But as Mrs. Dale had already seen Bell's letter, all this was not intensely interesting. At last Lily came to the point and asked her question. "Mamma, from whom was that other letter which you got this morning?"

Our story will perhaps be best told by communicating the letter to the reader before it was discussed with Lily. The letter was as follows:—

"General Committee Office, — January, 186—"

I should have said that Mrs. Dale had not opened the letter till she had found herself in the solitude of her own bed-room; and that then, before doing so, she had examined the handwriting with anxious eyes. When she first received it she thought she knew the writer, but was not sure. Then she had glanced at the impression over the fastening, and had known at once from whom the letter had come. It was from Mr. Crosbie, the man who had brought so much trouble into her house,

who had jilted her daughter; the only man in the world whom she had a right to regard as a positive enemy to herself. She had no doubt about it, as she tore the envelope open; and yet, when the address given made her quite sure, a new feeling of shivering came upon her, and she asked herself whether it might not be better that she should send his letter back to him without reading it. But she read it.

"MADAM," the letter began,—

"You will be very much surprised to hear from me, and I am quite aware that I am not entitled to the ordinary courtesy of an acknowledgment from you, should you be pleased to throw my letter on one side as unworthy of your notice. But I cannot refrain from addressing you, and must leave it to you to reply to me or not, as you may think fit.

"I will only refer to that episode of my life with which you are acquainted, for the sake of acknowledging my great fault and of assuring you that I did not go unpunished. It would be useless for me now to attempt to explain to you the circumstances which led me into that difficulty which ended in so great a blunder; but I will ask you to believe that my folly was greater than my sin.

"But I will come to my point at once. You are, no doubt, aware that I married a daughter of Lord De Courcy, and that I was separated from my wife a few weeks after our unfortunate marriage. It is now something over twelve months since she died at Baden-Baden in her mother's house. I never saw her since the day we first parted. I have not a word to say against her. The fault was mine in marrying a woman whom I did not love and had never loved. When I married Lady Alexandrina I loved, not her, but your daughter.

"I believe I may venture to say to you that your daughter once loved me. From the day on which I last wrote to you that terrible letter which told you of my fate I have never mentioned the name of Lily Dale to human ears. It has been too sacred for my mouth,—too sacred for the intercourse of any friendship with which I have been blessed. I now use it for the first time to you, in order that I may ask whether it be possible that her old love should ever live again. Mine has lived always,—has never faded for an hour, making me miserable during the years that have passed since I saw her, but

capable of making me very happy, if I may be allowed to see her again.

"You will understand my purpose now as well as though I were to write pages. I have no scheme formed in my head for seeing your daughter again. How can I dare to form a scheme, when I am aware that the chance of success must be so strong against me? But if you will tell me that there can be a gleam of hope, I will obey any commands that you can put upon me in any way that you may point out. I am free again,—and she is free. I love her with all my heart, and seem to long for nothing in the world but that she should become my wife. Whether any of her old love may still abide with her, you will know. If it do, it may even yet prompt her to forgive one who, in spite of falseness of conduct, has yet been true to her in heart.

"I have the honour to be, Madam,

"Your most obedient servant,

"ADOLPHUS CROSBIE."

This was the letter which Mrs. Dale had received, and as to which she had not as yet said a word to Lily, or even made up her mind whether she would say a word or not. Dearly as the mother and daughter loved each other, thorough as was the confidence between them, yet the name of Adolphus Crosbie had not been mentioned between them oftener, perhaps, than half-a-dozen times since the blow had been struck. Mrs. Dale knew that their feelings about the man were altogether different. She, herself, not only condemned him for what he had done, believing it to be impossible that any shadow of excuse could be urged for his offence, thinking that the fault had shown the man to be mean beyond redemption;—but she had allowed herself actually to hate him. He had in one sense murdered her daughter, and she believed that she could never forgive him. But Lily, as her mother well knew, had forgiven this man altogether, had made excuses for him which cleansed his sin of all its blackness in her own eyes, and was to this day anxious as ever for his welfare and his happiness. Mrs. Dale feared that Lily did in truth love him still. If it was so, was she not bound to show her this letter? Lily was old enough to judge for herself,—old enough, and wise enough too. Mrs. Dale told herself half-a-score of times that morning that she could not be justified in keeping the letter from her daughter.

But yet she much wished that the letter had never been written, and would have given very much to be able to put it out of the way without injustice to Lily. To her thinking it would be impossible that Lily should be happy in marrying such a man. Such a marriage now would be, as Mrs. Dale thought, a degradation to her daughter. A terrible injury had been done to her; but such reparation as this would, in Mrs. Dale's eyes, only make the injury deeper. And yet Lily loved the man; and, loving him, how could she resist the temptation of his offer? "Mamma, from whom was that letter which you got this morning?" Lily asked. For a few moments Mrs. Dale remained silent. "Mamma," continued Lily, "I think I know whom it was from. If you tell me to ask nothing further, of course I will not."

"No, Lily; I cannot tell you that."

"Then, mamma, out with it at once. What is the use of shivering on the brink?"

"It was from Mr. Crosbie."

"I knew it. I cannot tell you why, but I knew it. And now, mamma,—am I to read it?"

"You shall do as you please, Lily."

"Then I please to read it."

"Listen to me a moment first. For myself, I wish that the letter had never been written. It tells badly for the man as I think of it. I cannot understand how any man could have brought himself to address either you or me, after having acted as he acted."

"But, mamma, we differ about all that, you know."

"Now he has written, and there is the letter,—if you choose to read it."

Lily had it in her hand, but she still sat motionless, holding it. "You think, mamma, I ought not to read it?"

"You must judge for yourself, dearest."

"And if I do not read it, what shall you do, mamma?"

"I shall do nothing;—or, perhaps, I should in such a case acknowledge it, and tell him that we have nothing more to say to him."

"That would be very stern."

"He has done that which makes sternness necessary."

Then Lily was again silent, and still she sat motionless, with the letter in her hand. "Mamma," she said, at last, "if you tell me not

to read it I will give it you back unread. If you bid me exercise my own judgment, I shall take it upstairs and read it."

"You must exercise your own judgment," said Mrs. Dale. Then Lily got up from her chair and walked slowly out of the room, and went to her mother's chamber. The thoughts which passed through Mrs. Dale's mind while her daughter was reading the letter were very sad. She could find no comfort anywhere. Lily, she told herself, would surely give way to this man's renewed expressions of affection, and she, Mrs. Dale herself, would be called upon to give her child to a man whom she could neither love nor respect;—whom, for aught she knew, she could never cease to hate. And she could not bring herself to believe that Lily would be happy with such a man. As for her own life, desolate as it would be,—she cared little for that. Mothers know that their daughters will leave them. Even widowed mothers, mothers with but one child left,—such a one as was this mother,—are aware that they will be left alone, and they can bring themselves to welcome the sacrifice of themselves with something of satisfaction. Mrs. Dale and Lily had, indeed, of late become bound together especially, so that the mother had been justified in regarding the link which joined them as being firmer than that by which most daughters are bound to their mothers;—but in all that she would have found no regret. Even now, in these very days, she was hoping that Lily might yet be brought to give herself to John Eames. But she could not, after all that was come and gone, be happy in thinking that Lily should be given to Adolphus Crosbie.

When Mrs. Dale went upstairs to her own room before dinner Lily was not there; nor were they alone together again that evening except for a moment, when Lily, as was usual, went into her mother's room when she was undressing. But neither of them then said a word about the letter. Lily during dinner and throughout the evening had borne herself well, giving no sign of special emotion, keeping to herself entirely her own thoughts about the proposition made to her. And afterwards she had progressed diligently with the fabrication of Mr. Crawley's shirts, as though she had no such letter in her pocket. And yet there was not a moment in which she was not thinking of it. To Grace, just before she went to bed, she did say one word. "I wonder whether it can ever come to a person to be so placed that there

can be no doing right, let what will be done;—that, do or not do, as you may, it must be wrong?"

"I hope you are not in such a condition," said Grace.

"I am something near it," said Lily; "but perhaps if I look long enough I shall see the light."

"I hope it will be a happy light at last," said Grace, who thought that Lily was referring only to John Eames.

At noon on the next day Lily had still said nothing to her mother about the letter; and then what she said was very little. "When must you answer Mr. Crosbie, mamma?"

"When, my dear?"

"I mean how long may you take? It need not be to-day?"

"No;—certainly not to-day."

"Then I will talk over it with you to-morrow. It wants some thinking;—does it not, mamma?"

"It would not want much with me, Lily."

"But then, mamma, you are not I. Believing as I believe, feeling as I feel, it wants some thinking. That's what I mean."

"I wish I could help you, my dear."

"You shall help me,—to-morrow." The morrow came and Lily was still very patient; but she had prepared herself, and had prepared the time also, so that in the hour of the gloaming she was alone with her mother, and sure that she might remain alone with her for an hour or so. "Mamma, sit there," she said; "I will sit down here, and then I can lean against you and be comfortable. You can bear as much of me as that,—can't you, mamma?" Then Mrs. Dale put her arm over Lily's shoulder, and embraced her daughter. "And now, mamma, we will talk about this wonderful letter."

"I do not know, dear, that I have anything to say about it."

"But you must have something to say about it, mamma. You must bring yourself to have something to say,—to have a great deal to say."

"You know what I think as well as though I talked for a week."

"That won't do, mamma. Come, you must not be hard with me."

"Hard, Lily!"

"I don't mean that you will hurt me, or not give me any food,—or that you will not go on caring about me more than anything else in the whole world ten times over——" And Lily as she spoke tightened

the embrace of her mother's arm round her neck. "I'm not afraid you'll be hard in that way. But you must soften your heart so as to be able to mention his name and talk about him, and tell me what I ought to do. You must see with my eyes, and hear with my ears, and feel with my heart;—and then, when I know that you have done that, I must judge with your judgment."

"I wish you to use your own."

"Yes;—because you won't see with my eyes and hear with my ears. That's what I call being hard. Though you should feed me with blood from your breast, I should call you a hard pelican, unless you could give me also the sympathy which I demand from you. You see, mamma, we have never allowed ourselves to speak of this man."

"What need has there been, dearest?"

"Only because we have been thinking of him. Out of the full heart the mouth speaketh;—that is, the mouth does so when the full heart is allowed to have its own way comfortably."

"There are things which should be forgotten."

"Forgotten, mamma!"

"The memory of which should not be fostered by much talking."

"I have never blamed you, mamma; never, even in my heart. I have known how good and gracious and sweet you have been. But I have often accused myself of cowardice because I have not allowed his name to cross my lips either to you or to Bell. To talk of forgetting such an accident as that is a farce. And as for fostering the memory of it——! Do you think that I have ever spent a night from that time to this without thinking of him? Do you imagine that I have ever crossed our own lawn, or gone down through the garden-path there, without thinking of the times when he and I walked there together? There needs no fostering for such memories as those. They are weeds which will grow rank and strong though nothing be done to foster them. There is the earth and the rain, and that is enough for them. You cannot kill them if you would, and they certainly will not die because you are careful not to hoe and rake the ground.

"Lily, you forget how short the time has been as yet."

"I have thought it very long; but the truth is, mamma, that this non-fostering of memories, as you call it, has not been the real cause of our silence. We have not spoken of Mr. Crosbie because we have not thought alike about him. Had you spoken you would have spoken

with anger, and I could not endure to hear him abused. That has been it."

"Partly so, Lily."

"Now you must talk of him, and you must not abuse him. We must talk of him, because something must be done about his letter. Even if it be left unanswered it cannot be so left without discussion. And yet you must say no evil of him."

"Am I to think that he behaved well?"

"No, mamma; you are not to think that; but you are to look upon his fault as a fault that has been forgiven."

"It cannot be forgotten, dear."

"But, mamma, when you go to heaven——"

"My dear!"

"But you will go to heaven, mamma, and why should I not speak of it? You will go to heaven, and yet I suppose you have been wicked, because we are all very wicked. But you won't be told of your wickedness there. You won't be hated there, because you were this or that when you were here."

"I hope not, Lily; but isn't your argument almost profane?"

"No; I don't think so. We ask to be forgiven just as we forgive. That is the way in which we hope to be forgiven, and therefore it is the way in which we ought to forgive. When you say that prayer at night, mamma, do you ever ask yourself whether you have forgiven him?"

"I forgive him as far as humanity can forgive. I would do him no injury."

"But if you and I are forgiven only after that fashion we shall never get to heaven." Lily paused for some further answer from her mother, but as Mrs. Dale was silent she allowed that portion of the subject to pass as completed. "And now, mamma, what answer do you think we ought to send to his letter?"

"My dear, how am I to say? You know I have said already that if I could act on my own judgment I would send none."

"But that was said in the bitterness of gall."

"Come, Lily, say what you think yourself. We shall get on better when you have brought yourself to speak. Do you think that you wish to see him again?"

"I don't know, mamma. Upon the whole, I think not."

"Then in heaven's name let me write and tell him so."

"Stop a moment, mamma. There are two persons here to be considered,—or rather three."

"I would not have you think of me in such a question."

"I know you would not; but never mind, and let me go on. The three of us are concerned, at any rate; you, and he, and I. I am thinking of him now. We have all suffered, but I do believe that hitherto he has had the worst of it."

"And who has deserved the worst?"

"Mamma, how can you go back in that way? We have agreed that that should be regarded as done and gone. He has been very unhappy, and now we see what remedy he proposes to himself for his misery. Do I flatter myself if I allow myself to look at it in that way."

"Perhaps he thinks he is offering a remedy for your misery."

As this was said Lily turned round slowly and looked up into her mother's face. "Mamma," she said, "that is very cruel. I did not think you could be so cruel. How can you, who believe him to be so selfish, think that?"

"It is very hard to judge of men's motives. I have never supposed him to be so black that he would not wish to make atonement for the evil he has done."

"If I thought that, there certainly could be but one answer."

"Who can look into a man's heart and judge all the sources of his actions? There are mixed feelings there, no doubt. Remorse for what he has done; regret for what he has lost;—something, perhaps, of the purity of love."

"Yes, something,—I hope something,—for his sake."

"But when a horse kicks and bites, you know his nature and do not go near him. When a man has cheated you once, you think he will cheat you again, and you do not deal with him. You do not look to gather grapes from thistles, after you have found that they are thistles."

"I still go for the roses though I have often torn my hand with thorns in looking for them."

"But you do not pluck those that have become cankered in the blowing."

"Because he was once at fault, will he be cankered always?"

"I would not trust him."

"Now, mamma, see how different we are; or, rather, how different it is when one judges for oneself or for another. If it were simply myself, and my own future fate in life, I would trust him with it all to-morrow without a word. I should go to him as a gambler goes to the gambling-table, knowing that if I lost everything I could hardly be poorer than I was before. But I should have a better hope than the gambler is justified in having. That, however, is not my difficulty. And when I think of him I can see a prospect of success for the gambler. I think so well of myself that, loving him, as I do;—yes, mamma, do not be uneasy; loving him, as I do, I believe I could be a comfort to him. I think that he might be better with me than without me. That is, he would be so, if he could teach himself to look back upon the past as I can do, and to judge of me as I can judge of him."

"He has nothing, at least, for which to condemn you."

"But he would have were I to marry him now. He would condemn me because I had forgiven him. He would condemn me because I had borne what he had done to me, and had still loved him,—loved him through it all. He would feel and know the weakness. And there is weakness! I have been weak in not being able to rid myself of him altogether. He would recognize this after awhile, and would despise me for it. But he would not see what there is of devotion to him in my being able to bear the taunts of the world in going back to him,—and your taunts, and my own taunts. I should have to bear his also,—not spoken aloud, but to be seen in his face and heard in his voice,—and that I could not endure. If he despised me, and he would, that would make us both unhappy. Therefore, mamma, tell him not to come; tell him that he can never come; but, if it be possible, tell him this tenderly." Then she got up and walked away, as though she were going out of the room; but her mother had caught her before the door was open.

"Lily," she said, "if you think you can be happy with him, he shall come."

"No, mamma, no. I have been looking for the light ever since I read his letter, and I think I see it. And now, mamma, I will make a clean breast of it. From the moment in which I heard that that poor woman was dead, I have been fluttered. It has been weak of me, and silly, and contemptible. But I could not help it. I kept on asking myself whether he would ever think of me now. Well; he has

answered the question; and has so done it that he has forced upon me the necessity of a resolution. I have resolved, and I believe that I shall be the better for it."

The letter which Mrs. Dale wrote to Mr. Crosbie was as follows:—

"Mrs. Dale presents her compliments to Mr. Crosbie, and begs to assure him that it will not now be possible that he should renew the relations which were broken off, three years ago, between him and Mrs. Dale's family."

It was very short, certainly, and it did not by any means satisfy Mrs. Dale. But she did not know how to say more without saying too much. The object of her letter was to save him the trouble of a futile perseverance, and them from the annoyance of persecution; and this she wished to do without mentioning her daughter's name. And she was determined that no word should escape her in which there was any touch of severity, any hint of an accusation. So much she owed to Lily in return for all that Lily was prepared to abandon. "There is my note," she said at last, offering it to her daughter. "I did not mean to see it," said Lily; "and, mamma, I will not read it now. Let it go. I know you have been good and have not scolded him." "I have not scolded him certainly," said Mrs. Dale. And then the letter was sent.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. DOBBS BROUGHTON'S DINNER-PARTY.

Mr. John Eames, of the Income-tax Office, had in these days risen so high in the world that people in the west end of town, and very respectable people too,—people living in South Kensington, in neighbourhoods not far from Belgravia, and in very handsome houses

round Bayswater,—were glad to ask him out to dinner. Money had been left to him by an earl, and rumour had of course magnified that money. He was a private secretary, which is in itself a great advance on being a mere clerk. And he had become the particularly intimate friend of an artist who had pushed himself into high fashion during the last year or two,—one Conway Dalrymple, whom the rich English world was beginning to pet and pelt with gilt sugar-plums, and who seemed to take very kindly to petting and gilt sugar-plums. I don't know whether the friendship of Conway Dalrymple had not done as much to secure John Eames his position at the Bayswater dinner-tables, as had either the private secretaryship, or the earl's money; and yet, when they had first known each other, now only two or three years ago, Conway Dalrymple had been the poorer man of the two. Some chance had brought them together, and they had lived in the same rooms for nearly two years. This arrangement had been broken up, and the Conway Dalrymple of these days had a studio of his own, somewhere near Kensington Palace, where he painted portraits of young countesses, and in which he had even painted a young duchess. It was the peculiar merit of his pictures,—so at least said the art-loving world,—that, though the likeness was always good, the stiffness of the modern portrait was never there. There was also ever some story told in Dalrymple's pictures over and above the story of the portraiture. This countess was drawn as a fairy with wings, that countess as a goddess with a helmet. The thing took for a time, and Conway Dalrymple was picking up his gilt sugar-plums with considerable rapidity.

On a certain day he and John Eames were to dine out together at a certain house in that Bayswater district. It was a large mansion, if not made of stone yet looking very stony, with thirty windows at least, all of them with cut stone frames, requiring, let me say, at least four thousand a year for its maintenance. And its owner, Dobbs Broughton, a man very well known both in the City and over the grass in Northamptonshire, was supposed to have a good deal more than four thousand a year. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, a very beautiful woman, who certainly was not yet thirty-five, let her worst enemies say what they might, had been painted by Conway Dalrymple as a Grace. There were, of course, three Graces in the picture, but each Grace was Mrs. Dobbs Broughton repeated. We all know how Graces stand

sometimes; two Graces looking one way, and one the other. In this picture, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton as centre Grace looked you full in the face. The same lady looked away from you, displaying her left shoulder as one side Grace, and displaying her right shoulder as the other side Grace. For this pretty toy Mr. Conway Dalrymple had picked up a gilt sugar-plum to the tune of six hundred pounds, and had, moreover, won the heart both of Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "Upon my word, Johnny," Dalrymple had said to his friend, "he's a deuced good fellow, has really a good glass of claret,—which is getting rarer and rarer every day,—and will mount you for a day, whenever you please, down at Market Harboro'. Come and dine with them." Johnny Eames condescended, and did go and dine with Mr. Dobbs Broughton. I wonder whether he remembered, when Conway Dalrymple was talking of the rarity of good claret, how much beer the young painter used to drink when they were out together in the country, as they used to be occasionally, three years ago; and how the painter had then been used to complain that bitter beer cost threepence a glass, instead of twopence, which had hitherto been the recognized price of the article. In those days the sugar-plums had not been gilt, and had been much rarer.

Johnny Eames and his friend went together to the house of Mr. Dobbs Broughton. As Dalrymple lived close to the Broughtons, Eames picked him up in a cab. "Filthy things, these cabs are," said Dalrymple, as he got into the Hansom.

"I don't know about that," said Johnny. "They're pretty good, I think.

"Foul things," said Conway. "Don't you feel what a draught comes in here because the glass is cracked? I'd have one of my own, only I should never know what to do with it."

"The greatest nuisance on earth, I should think," said Johnny.

"If you could always have it standing ready round the corner," said the artist, "it would be delightful. But one would want half a dozen horses and two or three men for that."

"I think the stands are the best," said Johnny.

They were a little late,—a little later than they should have been had they considered that Eames was to be introduced to his new acquaintances. But he had already lived long enough before the world to be quite at his ease in such circumstances, and he entered Mrs.

Broughton's drawing-room with his pleasantest smile upon his face. But as he entered he saw a sight which made him look serious in spite of his efforts to the contrary. Mr. Adolphus Crosbie, secretary to the Board at the General Committee Office, was standing on the rug before the fire.

"Who will be there?" Eames had asked of his friend, when the suggestion to go and dine with Dobbs Broughton had been made to him.

"Impossible to say," Conway had replied. "A certain horrible fellow of the name of Musselboro, will almost certainly be there. He always is when they have anything of a swell dinner-party. He is a sort of partner of Broughton's in the City. He wears a lot of chains, and has elaborate whiskers, and an elaborate waistcoat, which is worse; and he doesn't wash his hands as often as he ought to do."

"An objectionable party, rather, I should say," said Eames.

"Well, yes; Musselboro is objectionable. He's very good-humoured you know, and good-looking in a sort of way, and goes everywhere; that is, among people of this sort. Of course he's not hand-and-glove with Lord Derby; and I wish he could be made to wash his hands. They haven't any other standing dish, and you may meet anybody. They always have a Member of Parliament; they generally manage to catch a Baronet; and I have met a Peer there. On that august occasion Musselboro was absent."

So instructed, Eames, on entering the room, looked round at once for Mr. Musselboro. "If I don't see the whiskers and chain," he had said, "I shall know there's a Peer." Mr. Musselboro was in the room, but Eames had descried Mr. Crosbie long before he had seen Mr. Musselboro.

There was no reason for confusion on his part in meeting Crosbie. They had both loved Lily Dale. Crosbie might have been successful, but for his own fault. Eames had on one occasion been thrown into contact with him, and on that occasion had quarrelled with him and had beaten him, giving him a black eye, and in this way obtaining some mastery over him. There was no reason why he should be ashamed of meeting Crosbie; and yet when he saw him, the blood mounted all over his face, and he forgot to make any further search for Mr. Musselboro.

"I am so much obliged to Mr. Dalrymple for bringing you," said

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton very sweetly, "only he ought to have come sooner. Naughty man! I know it was his fault. Will you take Miss Demolines down? Miss Demolines,—Mr. Eames."

Mr. Dobbs Broughton was somewhat sulky and had not welcomed our hero very cordially. He was beginning to think that Conway Dalrymple gave himself airs, and did not sufficiently understand that a man who had horses at Market Harboro' and '41 Lafitte was at any rate as good as a painter who was pelted with gilt sugar-plums for painting countesses. But he was a man whose ill-humour never lasted long, and he was soon pressing his wine on Johnny Eames as though he loved him dearly.

But there was yet a few minutes before they went down to dinner, and Johnny Eames, as he endeavoured to find something to say to Miss Demolines,—which was difficult, as he did not in the least know Miss Demolines' line of conversation,—was aware that his efforts were impeded by thoughts of Mr. Crosbie. The man looked older than when he had last seen him,—so much older that Eames was astonished. He was bald, or becoming bald; and his whiskers were grey, or were becoming grey, and he was much fatter. Johnny Eames, who was always thinking of Lily Dale, could not now keep himself from thinking of Adolphus Crosbie. He saw at a glance that the man was in mourning, though there was nothing but his shirt-studs by which to tell it; and he knew that he was in mourning for his wife. "I wish she might have lived for ever," Johnny said to himself.

He had not yet been definitely called upon by the entrance of the servant to offer his arm to Miss Demolines, when Crosbie walked across to him from the rug and addressed him.

"Mr. Eames," said he, "it is some time since we met." And he offered his hand to Johnny.

"Yes, it is," said Johnny, accepting the proffered salutation. "I don't know exactly how long, but ever so long."

"I am very glad to have the opportunity of shaking hands with you," said Crosbie; and then he retired, as it had become his duty to wait with his arm ready for Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. Having married an earl's daughter he was selected for that honour. There was a barrister in the room, and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton ought to have known better. As she professed to be guided in such matters by the rules laid down by the recognized authorities, she ought to have been aware that

a man takes no rank from his wife. But she was entitled I think to merciful consideration for her error. A woman situated as was Mrs. Dobbs Broughton cannot altogether ignore these terrible rules. She cannot let her guests draw lots for precedence. She must select some one for the honour of her own arm. And amidst the intricacies of rank how is it possible for a woman to learn and to remember everything? If Providence would only send Mrs. Dobbs Broughton a Peer for every dinner-party, the thing would go more easily; but what woman will tell me, off-hand, which should go out of a room first, a C.B., an Admiral of the Blue, the Dean of Barchester, or the Dean of Arches? Who is to know who was everybody's father? How am I to remember that young Thompson's progenitor was made a baronet and not a knight when he was Lord Mayor? Perhaps Mrs. Dobbs Broughton ought to have known that Mr. Crosbie could have gained nothing by his wife's rank, and the barrister may be considered to have been not immoderately severe when he simply spoke of her afterwards as the silliest and most ignorant old woman he had ever met in his life. Eames with the lovely Miss Demolines on his arm was the last to move before the hostess. Mr. Dobbs Broughton had led the way energetically with old Lady Demolines. There was no doubt about Lady Demolines,—as his wife had told him, because her title marked her. Her husband had been a physician in Paris, and had been knighted in consequence of some benefit supposed to have been done to some French scion of royalty,—when such scions in France were royal and not imperial. Lady Demolines' rank was not much, certainly; but it served to mark her, and was beneficial.

As he went downstairs Eames was still thinking of his meeting with Crosbie, and had as yet hardly said a word to his neighbour, and his neighbour had not said a word to him. Now Johnny understood dinners quite well enough to know that in a party of twelve, among whom six are ladies, everything depends on your next neighbour, and generally on the next neighbour who specially belongs to you; and as he took his seat he was a little alarmed as to his prospect for the next two hours. On his other hand sat Mrs. Ponsonby, the barrister's wife, and he did not much like the look of Mrs. Ponsonby. She was fat, heavy, and good-looking; with a broad space between her eyes, and light smooth hair;—a youthful British matron every inch of her, of whom any barrister with a young family of children might be proud.

Now Miss Demolines, though she was hardly to be called beautiful, was at any rate remarkable. She had large, dark, well-shaped eyes, and very dark hair, which she wore tangled about in an extraordinary manner, and she had an expressive face,—a face made expressive by the owner's will. Such power of expression is often attained by dint of labour,—though it never reaches to the expression of anything in particular. She was almost sufficiently good-looking to be justified in considering herself to be a beauty.

But Miss Demolines, though she had said nothing as yet, knew her game very well. A lady cannot begin conversation to any good purpose in the drawing-room, when she is seated and the man is standing; —nor can she know then how the table may subsequently arrange itself. Powder may be wasted, and often is wasted, and the spirit rebels against the necessity of commencing a second enterprise. But Miss Demolines, when she found herself seated, and perceived that on the other side of her was Mr. Ponsonby, a married man, commenced her enterprise at once, and our friend John Eames was immediately aware that he would have no difficulty as to conversation.

"Don't you like winter dinner-parties?" began Miss Demolines. This was said just as Johnny was taking his seat, and he had time to declare that he liked dinner-parties at all periods of the year if the dinner was good and the people pleasant before the host had muttered something which was intended to be understood to be a grace. "But I mean especially in winter," continued Miss Demolines. "I don't think daylight should ever be admitted at a dinner-table; and though you may shut out the daylight, you can't shut out the heat. And then there are always so many other things to go to in May and June and July. Dinners should be stopped by Act of Parliament for those three months. I don't care what people do afterwards, because we always fly away on the first of August."

"That is good-natured on your part."

"I'm sure what I say would be for the good of society;—but at this time of the year a dinner is warm and comfortable."

"Very comfortable, I think."

"And people get to know each other;"—in saying which Miss Demolines looked very pleasantly up into Johnny's face.

"There is a great deal in that," said he. "I wonder whether you and I will get to know each other?"

"Of course we shall;—that is, if I'm worth knowing."

"There can be no doubt about that, I should say."

"Time alone can tell. But, Mr. Eames, I see that Mr. Crosbie is a friend of yours."

"Hardly a friend."

"I know very well that men are friends when they step up and shake hands with each other. It is the same as when women kiss."

"When I see women kiss, I always think that there is deep hatred at the bottom of it."

"And there may be deep hatred between you and Mr. Crosbie for anything I know to the contrary," said Miss Demolines.

"The very deepest," said Johnny, pretending to look grave.

"Ah, then I know he is your bosom friend, and that you will tell him anything I say. What a strange history that was of his marriage!"

"So I have heard;—but he is not quite bosom friend enough with me to have told me all the particulars. I know that his wife is dead."

"Dead; oh, yes; she has been dead these two years I should say."

"Not so long as that, I should think."

"Well,—perhaps not. But it's ever so long ago;—quite long enough for him to be married again. Did you know her?"

"I never saw her in my life."

"I knew her,—not well indeed; but I am intimate with her sister, Lady Amelia Gazebee, and I have met her there. None of that family have married what you may call well. And now, Mr. Eames, pray look at the *menu* and tell me what I am to eat. Arrange for me a little dinner of my own, out of the great bill of fare provided. I always expect some gentleman to do that for me. Mr. Crosbie, you know, only lived with his wife for one month."

"So I've been told."

"And a terrible month they had of it. I used to hear of it. He doesn't look that sort of man, does he?"

"Well;—no. I don't think he does. But what sort of man do you mean?"

"Why, such a regular Bluebeard! Of course you know how he treated another girl before he married Lady Alexandrina. She died of it,—with a broken heart; absolutely died; and there he is, indifferent as possible;—and would treat me in the same way to-morrow if I would let him."

Johnny Eames, finding it impossible to talk to Miss Demolines about Lily Dale, took up the card of the dinner and went to work in earnest, recommending his neighbour what to eat and what to pass by. "But you've skipped the *pâté*," she said, with energy.

"Allow me to ask you to choose mine for me instead. You are much more fit to do it." And she did choose his dinner for him.

They were sitting at a round table, and in order that the ladies and gentlemen should alternate themselves properly, Mr. Musselboro was opposite to the host. Next to him on his right was old Mrs. Van Siever, the widow of a Dutch merchant, who was very rich. She was a ghastly thing to look at, as well from the quantity as from the nature of the wiggeries which she wore. She had not only a false front, but long false curls, as to which it cannot be conceived that she would suppose that any one would be ignorant as to their falseness. She was very thin, too, and very small, and putting aside her wiggeries, you would think her to be all eyes. She was a ghastly old woman to the sight, and not altogether pleasant in her mode of talking. She seemed to know Mr. Musselboro very well, for she called him by his name without any prefix. He had, indeed, begun life as a clerk in her husband's office.

"Why doesn't What's-his-name have real silver forks?" she said to him. Now Mrs. What's-his-name,—Mrs. Dobbs Broughton we will call her—was sitting on the other side of Mr. Musselboro, between him and Mr. Crosbie; and, so placed, Mr. Musselboro found it rather hard to answer the question, more especially as he was probably aware that other questions would follow.

"What's the use?" said Mr. Musselboro. "Everybody has these plated things now. What's the use of a lot of capital lying dead?"

"Everybody doesn't. I don't. You know as well as I do, Musselboro, that the appearance of the thing goes for a great deal. Capital isn't lying dead as long as people know that you've got it."

Before answering this Mr. Musselboro was driven to reflect that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton would probably hear his reply. "You won't find that there is any doubt on that head in the City as to Broughton," he said.

"I shan't ask in the City, and if I did, I should not believe what people told me. I think there are sillier folks in the City than any-

where else. What did he give for that picture upstairs which the young man painted?"

"What, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's portrait?"

"You don't call that a portrait, do you? I mean the one with the three naked women?" Mr. Musselboro glanced round with one eye, and felt sure that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had heard the question. But the old woman was determined to have an answer. "How much did he give for it, Musselboro?"

"Six hundred pounds, I believe," said Mr. Musselboro, looking straight before him as he answered, and pretending to treat the subject with perfect indifference.

"Did he indeed, now? Six hundred pounds! And yet he hasn't got silver spoons. How things are changed! Tell me, Musselboro, who was that young man who came in with the painter?"

Mr. Musselboro turned round and asked Mrs. Broughton. "A Mr. John Eames, Mrs. Van Siever," said Mrs. Broughton, whispering across the front of Mr. Musselboro. "He is private secretary to Lord—Lord—Lord—I forget who. Some one of the Ministers, I know. And he had a great fortune left him the other day by Lord—Lord—Lord—somebody else."

"All among the lords, I see," said Mrs. Van Siever. Then Mrs. Dobbs Broughton drew herself back, remembering some little attack which had been made on her by Mrs. Van Siever when she herself had had the real lord to dine with her.

There was a Miss Van Siever there also, sitting between Crosbie and Conway Dalrymple. Conway Dalrymple had been specially brought there to sit next to Miss Van Siever. "There's no knowing how much she'll have," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, in the warmth of her friendship. "But it's all real. It is, indeed. The mother is awfully rich."

"But she's awful in another way, too," said Dalrymple.

"Indeed she is, Conway." Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had got into a way of calling her young friend by his Christian name. "All the world calls him Conway," she had said to her husband once when her husband caught her doing so. "She is awful. Her husband made the business in the City, when things were very different from what they are now, and I can't help having her. She has transactions of business with Dobbs. But there's no mistake about the money.

"She needn't leave it to her daughter, I suppose?"

"But why shouldn't she? She has nobody else. You might offer to paint her, you know. She'd make an excellent picture. So much character. You come and see her."

Conway Dalrymple had expressed his willingness to meet Miss Van Siever, saying something, however, as to his present position being one which did not admit of any matrimonial speculation. Then Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had told him, with much seriousness, that he was altogether wrong, and that were he to forget himself, or commit himself, or misbehave himself, there must be an end to their pleasant intimacy. In answer to which, Mr. Dalrymple had said that her Grace was surely of all Graces the least gracious. And now he had come to meet Miss Van Siever, and was seated next to her at table.

Miss Van Siever, who at this time had perhaps reached her twenty-fifth year, was certainly a handsome young woman. She was fair and large, bearing no likeness whatever to her mother. Her features were regular, and her full, clear eyes had a brilliance of their own, looking at you always steadfastly and boldly, though very seldom pleasantly. Her mouth would have been beautiful had it not been too strong for feminine beauty. Her teeth were perfect,—too perfect,—looking like miniature walls of carved ivory. She knew the fault of this perfection, and showed her teeth as little as she could. Her nose and chin were finely chiselled, and her head stood well upon her shoulders. But there was something hard about it all which repelled you. Dalrymple, when he saw her, recoiled from her, not outwardly, but inwardly. Yes, she was handsome, as may be a horse or a tiger; but there was about her nothing of feminine softness. He could not bring himself to think of taking Clara Van Siever as the model that was to sit before him for the rest of his life. He certainly could make a picture of her, as had been suggested by his friend, Mrs. Broughton, but it must be as Judith with the dissevered head, or as Jael using her hammer over the temple of Sisera. Yes,—he thought she would do as Jael; and if Mrs. Van Siever would throw him a sugar-plum, for he would want the sugar-plum, seeing that any other result was out of the question,—the thing might be done. Such was the idea of Mr. Conway Dalrymple respecting Miss Van Siever,—before he led her down to dinner.

At first he found it hard to talk to her. She answered him, and not with monosyllables. But she answered him without sympathy, or

apparent pleasure in talking. Now the young artist was in the habit of being flattered by ladies, and expected to have his small talk made very easy for him. He liked to give himself little airs, and was not generally disposed to labour very hard at the task of making himself agreeable.

"Were you ever painted yet?" he asked her after they had both been sitting silent for two or three minutes.

"Was I ever—ever painted? In what way?"

"I don't mean rouged, or enamelled, or got up by Madame Rachel; but have you ever had your portrait taken?"

"I have been photographed,—of course."

"That's why I asked you if you had been painted,—so as to make some little distinction between the two. I am a painter by profession, and do portraits."

"So Mrs. Broughton told me."

"I am not asking for a job, you know."

"I am quite sure of that."

"But I should have thought you would have been sure to have sat to somebody."

"I never did. I never thought of doing so. One does those things at the instigation of one's intimate friends,—fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts, and the like."

"Or husbands, perhaps,—or lovers?"

"Well, yes; my intimate friend is my mother, and she would never dream of such a thing. She hates pictures."

"Hates pictures!"

"And especially portraits. And I'm afraid, Mr. Dalrymple, she hates artists."

"Good heavens; how cruel! I suppose there is some story attached to it. There has been some fatal likeness,—some terrible picture,—something in her early days?"

"Nothing of the kind, Mr. Dalrymple. It is merely the fact that her sympathies are with ugly things, rather than with pretty things. I think she loves the mahogany dinner-table better than anything else in the house; and she likes to have everything dark, and plain, and solid."

"And good?"

"Good of its kind, certainly."

"If everybody was like your mother how would the artists live?"

"There would be none."

"And the world, you think, would be none the poorer?"

"I did not speak of myself. I think the world would be very much the poorer. I am very fond of the ancient masters, though I do not suppose that I understand them."

"They are easier understood than the modern I can tell you. Perhaps you don't care for modern pictures?"

"Not in comparison, certainly. If that is uncivil, you have brought it on yourself. But I do not in truth mean anything derogatory to the painters of the day. When their pictures are old, they,—that is, the good ones among them,—will be nice also."

"Pictures are like wine, and want age, you think."

"Yes, and statues too, and buildings above all things. The colours of new paintings are so glaring, and the faces are so bright and self-conscious, that they look to me when I go to the exhibition like coloured prints in a child's new picture-book. It is the same thing with buildings. One sees all the points, and nothing is left to the imagination."

"I find I have come across a real critic."

"I hope, at any rate, I am not a sham one;" and Miss Van Siever as she said this looked very savage.

"I shouldn't take you to be a sham in anything."

"Ah, that would be saying a great deal for myself. Who can undertake to say that he is not a sham in anything?"

As she said this the ladies were getting up. So Miss Van Siever also got up, and left Mr. Conway Dalrymple to consider whether he could say or could think of himself that he was not a sham in anything. As regarded Miss Clara Van Siever, he began to think that he should not object to paint her portrait, even though there might be no sugar-plum. He would certainly do it as Jael; and he would, if he dared, insert dimly in the background some idea of the face of the mother, half-appearing, half-vanishing, as the spirit of the sacrifice. He was composing his picture while Mr. Dobbs Broughton was arranging himself and his bottles.

"Musselboro," he said, "I'll come up between you and Crosbie. Mr. Eames, though I run away from you, the claret shall remain; or, rather, it shall flow backwards and forwards as rapidly as you will."

"I'll keep it moving," said Johnny.

"Do; there's a good fellow. It's a nice glass of wine, isn't it? Old Ramsby, who keeps as good a stock of stuff as any wine-merchant in London, gave me a hint, three or four years ago, that he'd a lot of tidy Bordeaux. It's '47, you know. He had ninety dozen, and I took it all."

"What was the figure, Broughton?" said Crosbie, asking the question which he knew was expected.

"Well, I only gave one hundred and four for it then; it's worth a hundred and twenty now. I wouldn't sell a bottle of it for any money. Come, Dalrymple, pass it round; but fill your glass first."

"Thank you, no; I don't like it. I'll drink sherry."

"Don't like it!" said Dobbs Broughton.

"It's strange, isn't it? but I don't."

"I thought you particularly told me to drink his claret?" said Johnny to his friend afterwards.

"So I did," said Conway; "and wonderfully good wine it is. But I make it a rule never to eat or drink anything in a man's house when he praises it himself and tells me the price of it."

"And I make it a rule never to cut the nose off my own face," said Johnny.

Before they went Johnny Eames had been specially invited to call on Lady Demolines, and had said that he would do so. "We live in Porchester Gardens," said Miss Demolines. "Upon my word, I believe that the farther London stretches in that direction, the farther mamma will go. She thinks the air so much better. I know it's a long way."

"Distance is nothing to me," said Johnny; "I can always set off over-night."

Conway Dalrymple did not get invited to call on Mrs. Van Siever, but before he left the house he did say a word or two more to his friend Mrs. Broughton as to Clara Van Siever. "She is a fine young woman," he said; "she is indeed."

"You have found it out, have you?"

"Yes, I have found it out. I do not doubt that some day she'll murder her husband or her mother, or startle the world by some newly-invented crime; but that only makes her the more interesting."

"And when you add to that all the old woman's money," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, "you think that she might do?"

"For a picture, certainly. I'm speaking of her simply as a model. Could we not manage it? Get her once here without her mother knowing it, or Broughton, or any one. I've got the subject,—Jael and Sisera, you know. I should like to put Musselboro in as Sisera, with the nail half driven in." Mrs. Dobbs Broughton declared that the scheme was a great deal too wicked for her participation, but at last she promised to think of it.

"You might as well come up and have a cigar," Dalrymple said, as he and his friend left Mr. Broughton's house. Johnny said that he would go up and have a cigar or two. "And now tell me what you think of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton and her set," said Conway.

"Well; I'll tell you what I think of them. I think they stink of money, as the people say; but I'm not sure that they've got any all the same."

"I should suppose he makes a large income."

"Very likely, and perhaps spends more than he makes. A good deal of it looked to me like make-believe. There's no doubt about the claret, but the champagne was execrable. A man is a criminal to have such stuff handed round to his guests. And there isn't the ring of real gold about the house."

"I hate the ring of the gold, as you call it," said the artist.

"So do I,—I hate it like poison; but if it is there, I like it to be true. There is a sort of persons going now,—and one meets them out, here and there, every day of one's life,—who are downright Brummagem to the ear and to the touch and to the sight, and we recognize them as such at the very first moment. My honoured lord and master, Sir Raffle, is one such. There is no mistaking him. Clap him down upon the counter, and he rings dull and untrue at once. Pardon me, my dear Conway, if I say the same of your excellent friend Mr. Dobbs Broughton."

"I think you go a little too far, but I don't deny it. What you mean is, that he's not a gentleman."

"I mean a great deal more than that. Bless you, when you come to talk of a gentleman, who is to define the word? How do I know whether or no I'm a gentleman myself. When I used to be in Burton Crescent, I was hardly a gentleman then, sitting at the same table with Mrs. Roper and the Lupexes;—do you remember them,—and the lovely Amelia?"

"I suppose you were a gentleman, then, as well as now?"

"You, if you had been painting duchesses then, with a studio in Kensington Gardens, would not have said so, if you had happened to come across me. I can't define a gentleman, even in my own mind; —but I can define the sort of man with whom I think I can live pleasantly."

"And poor Dobbs doesn't come within the line?"

"N—o, not quite; a very nice fellow, I'm quite sure, and I am very much obliged to you for taking me there."

"I never will take you to any house again. And what did you think of his wife?"

"That's a horse of another colour altogether. A pretty woman with such a figure as hers has got a right to be anything she pleases. I see you are a great favourite."

"No, I'm not;—not especially. I do like her. She wants to make up a match between me and that Miss Van Siever. Miss Van is to have gold by the ingot, and jewels by the bushel, and a hatful of bank shares, and a whole mine in Cornwall, for her fortune."

"And is very handsome into the bargain."

"Yes; she's handsome."

"So is her mother," said Johnny. If you take the daughter, I'll take the mother, and see if I can't do you out of a mine or two. Good-night, old fellow. I'm only joking about old Dobbs. I'll go and dine there again to-morrow, if you like it."

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS MADALINA DEMOLINES.

"I DON'T think you care two straws about her," Conway Dalrymple said to his friend John Eames, two days after the dinner-party at Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's. The painter was at work in his studio, and the private secretary from the Income-tax Office, who was no doubt engaged on some special mission to the West End on the part of Sir Raffle Buffle, was sitting in a lounging-chair and smoking a cigar.

"Because I don't go about with my stockings cross-gartered, and do that kind of business?"

"Well, yes; because you don't do that kind of business, more or less."

"It isn't in my line, my dear fellow. I know what you mean, very well. I daresay, artistically speaking,——"

"Don't be an ass, Johnny."

"Well then, poetically, or romantically, if you like that better,—I daresay that poetically or romantically I am deficient. I eat my dinner very well, and I don't suppose I ought to do that; and, if you'll believe me, I find myself laughing sometimes."

"I never knew a man who laughed so much. You're always laughing."

"And that, you think, is a bad sign?"

"I don't believe you really care about her. I think you are aware that you have got a love-affair on hand, and that you hang on to it rather persistently, having in some way come to a resolution that you would be persistent. But there isn't much heart in it. I daresay there was once."

"And that is your opinion?"

"You are just like some of those men who for years past have been going to write a book on some new subject. The intention has been

sincere at first, and it never altogether dies away. But the would-be author, though he still talks of his work, knows that it will never be executed, and is very patient under the disappointment. All enthusiasm about the thing is gone, but he is still known as the man who is going to do it some day. You are the man who means to marry Miss Dale in five, ten, or twenty years' time."

"Now, Conway, all that is thoroughly unfair. The would-be author talks of his would-be book to everybody. I have never talked of Miss Dale to any one but you, and one or two very old family friends. And from year to year, and from month to month, I have done all that has been in my power to win her. I don't think I shall ever succeed, and yet I am as determined about it as I was when I first began it,—or rather much more so. If I do not marry Lily, I shall never marry at all, and if anybody were to tell me to-morrow that she had made up her mind to have me, I should well nigh go mad for joy. But I am not going to give up all my life for love. Indeed the less I can bring myself to give up for it, the better I shall think of myself. Now I'll go away and call on old Lady Demolines."

"And flirt with her daughter."

"Yes;—flirt with her daughter, if I get the opportunity. Why shouldn't I flirt with her daughter?"

"Why not, if you like it?"

"I don't like it,—not particularly, that is; because the young lady is not very pretty, nor yet very graceful, nor yet very wise."

"She is pretty after a fashion," said the artist, "and if not wise, she is at any rate clever."

"Nevertheless, I do not like her," said John Eames.

"Then why do you go there?"

"One has to be civil to people though they are neither pretty nor wise. I don't mean to insinuate that Miss Demolines is particularly bad, or indeed that she is worse than young ladies in general. I only abused her because there was an insinuation in what you said, that I was going to amuse myself with Miss Demolines in the absence of Miss Dale. The one thing has nothing to do with the other thing. Nothing that I shall say to Miss Demolines will at all militate against my loyalty to Lily."

"All right, old fellow;—I didn't mean to put you on your purgation. I want you to look at that sketch. Do you know for whom it is

intended?" Johnny took up a scrap of paper, and having scrutinized it for a minute or two declared that he had not the slightest idea who was represented. "You know the subject,—the story that is intended to be told?" said Dalrymple.

"Upon my word, I don't. There's some old fellow seems to be catching it over the head; but it's all so confused I can't make much of it. The woman seems to be uncommon angry."

"Do you ever read your Bible?"

"Ah, dear! not as often as I ought to do. Ah, I see; it's Sisera. I never could quite believe that story. Jael might have killed Captain Sisera in his sleep,—for which, by-the-by, she ought to have been hung, and she might possibly have done it with a hammer and a nail. But she could not have driven it through, and staked him to the ground."

"I've warrant enough for putting it into a picture, at any rate. My Jael there is intended for Miss Van Siever."

"Miss Van Siever! Well, it is like her. Has she sat for it?"

"O dear, no; not yet. I mean to get her to do so. There's a strength about her, which would make her sit the part admirably. And I fancy she would like to be driving a nail into a fellow's head. I think I shall take Musselboro for a Sisera."

"You're not in earnest?"

"He would just do for it. But of course I shan't ask him to sit, as my Jael would not like it. She would not consent to operate on so base a subject. So you really are going down to Guestwick?"

"Yes; I start to-morrow. Good-bye, old fellow. I'll come and sit for Sisera if you'll let me;—only Miss Van Jael shall have a blunted nail, if you please."

Then Johnny left the artist's room and walked across from Kensington to Lady Demolines' House. As he went he partly accused himself, and partly excused himself, in that matter of his love for Lily Dale. There were moments of his life in which he felt that he would willingly die for her,—that life was not worth having without her,—in which he went about inwardly reproaching fortune for having treated him so cruelly. Why should she not be his? He half believed that she loved him. She had almost told him so. She could not surely still love that other man who had treated her with such vile falsehood? As he considered the question in all its bearings he assured himself

over and over again that there would be now no fear of that rival;—and yet he had such fears, and hated Crosbie almost as much as ever. It was a thousand pities, certainly, that the man should have been made free by the death of his wife. But it could hardly be that he should seek Lily again, or that Lily, if so sought, should even listen to him. But yet there he was, free once more,—an odious being, whom Johnny was determined to sacrifice to his vengeance, if cause for such sacrifice should occur. And thus thinking of the real truth of his love, he endeavoured to excuse himself to himself from that charge of vagueness and laxness which his friend Conway Dalrymple had brought against him. And then again he accused himself of the same sin. If he had been positively in earnest, with downright manly earnestness, would he have allowed the thing to drag itself on with a weak uncertain life, as it had done for the last two or three years? Lily Dale had been a dream to him in his boyhood; and he had made a reality of his dream as soon as he had become a man. But before he had been able, as a man, to tell his love to the girl whom he had loved as a child, another man had intervened, and his prize had been taken from him. Then the wretched victor had thrown his treasure away, and he, John Eames, had been content to stoop to pick it up,—was content to do so now. But there was something which he felt to be unmanly in the constant stooping. Dalrymple had told him that he was like a man who is ever writing a book and yet never writes it. He would make another attempt to get his book written,—an attempt into which he would throw all his strength and all his heart. He would do his very best to make Lily his own. But if he failed now, he would have done with it. It seemed to him to be below his dignity as a man to be always coveting a thing which he could not obtain.

Johnny was informed by the boy in buttons, who opened the door for him at Lady Demolines', that the ladies were at home, and he was shown up into the drawing-room. Here he was allowed full ten minutes to explore the knicknacks on the table, and open the photograph book, and examine the furniture, before Miss Demolines made her appearance. When she did come, her hair was tangled more marvellously even than when he saw her at the dinner-party, and her eyes were darker, and her cheeks thinner. "I'm afraid mamma won't be able to come down," said Miss Demolines. "She will be so sorry; but she is not quite well to-day. The wind is in the east, she says,

and when she says the wind is in the east she always refuses to be well."

"Then I should tell her it was in the west."

"But it is in the east."

"Ah, there I can't help you, Miss Demolines. I never know which is east, and which west; and if I did, I shouldn't know from which point the wind blew."

"At any rate mamma can't come downstairs, and you must excuse her. What a very nice woman Mrs. Dobbs Broughton is." Johnny acknowledged that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was charming. "And Mr. Broughton is so good-natured!" Johnny again assented. "I like him of all things," said Miss Demolines. "So do I," said Johnny;—"I never liked anybody so much in my life. I suppose one is bound to say that kind of thing." "Oh, you ill-natured man," said Miss Demolines. "I suppose you think that poor Mr. Broughton is a little —just a little,—you know what I mean."

"Not exactly," said Johnny.

"Yes, you do; you know very well what I mean. And of course he is. How can he help it?"

"Poor fellow,—no. I don't suppose he can help it, or he would; —wouldn't he?"

"Of course Mr. Broughton had not the advantage of birth or much early education. All his friends know that, and make allowance accordingly. When she married him, she was aware of his deficiency, and made up her mind to put up with it."

"It was very kind of her; don't you think so?"

"I knew Maria Clutterbuck for years before she was married. Of course she was very much my senior, but, nevertheless, we were friends. I think I was hardly more than twelve years old when I first began to correspond with Maria. She was then past twenty. So you see, Mr. Eames, I make no secret of my age."

"Why should you?"

"But never mind that. Everybody knows that Maria Clutterbuck was very much admired. Of course I'm not going to tell you or any other gentleman all her history."

"I was in hopes you were."

"Then certainly your hopes will be frustrated, Mr. Eames. But undoubtedly when she told us that she was going to take Dobbs

Broughton, we were a little disappointed. Maria Clutterbuck had been used to a better kind of life. You understand what I mean, Mr. Eames?"

"Oh, exactly;—and yet it's not a bad kind of life, either."

"No, no; that is true. It has its attractions. She keeps her carriage, sees a good deal of company, has an excellent house, and goes abroad for six weeks every year. But you know, Mr. Eames, there is, perhaps, a little uncertainty about it."

"Life is always uncertain, Miss Demolines."

"You're quizzing now, I know. But don't you feel now, really, that City money is always very chancy? It comes and goes so quick."

"As regards the going, I think that's the same with all money," said Johnny.

"Not with land, or the funds. Mamma has every shilling laid out in a first-class mortgage on land at four per cent. That does make one feel so secure! The land can't run away."

"But you think poor Broughton's money may?"

"It's all speculation, you know. I don't believe she minds it; I don't, indeed. She lives that kind of fevered life now that she likes excitement. Of course we all know that Mr. Dobbs Broughton is not what we can call an educated gentleman. His manners are against him, and he is very ignorant. Even dear Maria would admit that."

"One would perhaps let that pass without asking her opinion at all."

"She has acknowledged it to me, twenty times. But he is very good-natured, and lets her do pretty nearly anything that she likes. I only hope she won't trespass on his good-nature. I do, indeed."

"You mean, spend too much money?"

"No; I didn't mean that exactly. Of course she ought to be moderate, and I hope she is. To that kind of fevered existence profuse expenditure is perhaps necessary. But I was thinking of something else. I fear she is a little giddy."

"Dear me! I should have thought she was too—too—too——"

"You mean too old for anything of that kind. Maria Broughton must be thirty-three if she's a day."

"That would make you just twenty-five," said Johnny, feeling perfectly sure as he said so that the lady whom he was addressing was at any rate past thirty!

"Never mind my age, Mr. Eames; whether I am twenty-five, or a hundred-and-five, has nothing to do with poor Maria Clutterbuck. But now I'll tell you why I mention all this to you. You must have seen how foolish she is about your friend Mr. Dalrymple?"

"Upon my word, I haven't."

"Nonsense, Mr. Eames; you have. If she were your wife, would you like her to call a man Conway? Of course you would not. I don't mean to say that there's anything in it. I know Maria's principles too well to suspect that. It's merely because she's flighty and fevered."

"That fevered existence accounts for it all," said Johnny.

"No doubt it does," said Miss Demolines, with a nod of her head, which was intended to show that she was willing to give her friend the full benefit of any excuse which could be offered for her. "But don't you think you could do something, Mr. Eames?"

"I do something?"

"Yes, you. You and Mr. Dalrymple are such friends! If you were just to point out to him, you know——"

"Point out what? Tell him that he oughtn't to be called Conway? Because, after all, I suppose that's the worst of it. If you mean to say that Dalrymple is in love with Mrs. Broughton, you never made a greater mistake in your life."

"Oh, no; not in love. That would be terrible, you know." And Miss Demolines shook her head sadly. "But there may be so much mischief done without anything of that kind! Thoughtlessness, you know, Mr. Eames,—pure thoughtlessness! Think of what I have said, and if you can speak a word to your friend, do. And now I want to ask you something else. I'm so glad you're come, because circumstances have seemed to make it necessary that you and I should know each other. We may be of so much use if we put our heads together." Johnny bowed when he heard this, but made no immediate reply. "Have you heard anything about a certain picture that is being planned?" Johnny did not wish to answer this question, but Miss Demolines paused so long, and looked so earnestly into his face, that he found himself forced to say something.

"What picture?"

"A certain picture that is—, or, perhaps, that is not to be, painted by Mr. Dalrymple?"

"I hear so much about Dalrymple's pictures! You don't mean the

portrait of Lady Glencora Palliser? That is nearly finished, and will be in the Exhibition this year."

"I don't mean that at all. I mean a picture that has not yet been begun."

"A portrait, I suppose?"

"As to that I cannot quite say. It is at any rate to be a likeness. I am sure you have heard of it. Come, Mr. Eames; it would be better that we should be candid with each other. You remember Miss Van Siever, of course?"

"I remember that she dined at the Broughtons'."

"And you have heard of Jael, I suppose, and Sisera?"

"Yes, in a general way,—in the Bible."

"And now will you tell me whether you have not heard the names of Jael and Miss Van Siever coupled together? I see you know all about it."

"I have heard of it, certainly."

"Of course you have. So have I, as you perceive. Now, Mr. Eames," —and Miss Demolines' voice became tremulously eager as she addressed him,—"it is your duty, and it is my duty, to take care that that picture shall never be painted."

"But why should it not be painted?"

"You don't know Miss Van Siever, yet?"

"Not in the least."

"Nor Mrs. Van Siever?"

"I never spoke a word to her."

"I do. I know them both,—well." There was something almost grandly tragic in Miss Demolines' voice as she thus spoke. "Yes, Mr. Eames, I know them well. If that scheme be continued, it will work terrible mischief. You and I must prevent it."

"But I don't see what harm it will do."

"Think of Conway Dalrymple passing so many hours in Maria's sitting-room upstairs! The picture is to be painted there, you know."

"But Miss Van Siever will be present. Won't that make it all right? What is there wrong about Miss Van Siever?"

"I won't deny that Clara Van Siever has a certain beauty of her own. To me she is certainly the most unattractive woman that I ever came near. She is simply repulsive!" Hereupon Miss Demolines held up her hand as though she were banishing Miss Van Siever for ever from

ner sight, and shuddered slightly. "Men think her handsome, and she is handsome. But she is false, covetous, malicious, cruel, and dishonest."

"What a fiend in petticoats!"

"You may say that, Mr. Eames. And then her mother! Her mother is not so bad. Her mother is very different. But the mother is an odious woman, too. It was an evil day for Maria Clutterbuck when she first saw either the mother or the daughter. I tell you that in confidence."

"But what can I do?" said Johnny, who began to be startled and almost interested by the eagerness of the woman.

"I'll tell you what you can do. Don't let your friend go to Mr. Broughton's house to paint the picture. If he does do it, there will mischief come of it. Of course you can prevent him."

"I should not think of trying to prevent him unless I knew why."

"She's a nasty proud minx, and it would set her up ever so high,—to think that she was being painted by Mr. Dalrymple! But that isn't the reason. Maria would get into terrible trouble about it, and there would be no end of mischief. I must not tell you more now, and if you do not believe me, I cannot help it. Surely, Mr. Eames, my word may be taken as going for something? And when I ask you to help me in this, I do expect that you will not refuse me." By this time Miss Demolines was sitting close to him, and had more than once put her hand upon his arm in the energy of her eloquence. Then as he remembered that he had never seen Miss Demolines till the other day, or Miss Van Siever, or even Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, he bethought himself that it was all very droll. Nevertheless he had no objection to Miss Demolines putting her hand upon his arm.

"I never like to interfere in anything that does not seem to be my own business," said Johnny.

"Is not your friend's business your own business? What does friendship mean if it is not so? And when I tell you that it is my business, mine of right, does that go for nothing with you? I thought I might depend upon you, Mr. Eames; I did indeed." Then again she put her hand upon his arm, and as he looked into her eyes he began to think that after all she was good-looking in a certain way. At any rate she had fine eyes, and there was something picturesque about the entanglement of her hair. "Think of it, and then come back and talk to me again," said Miss Demolines.

"But I am going out of town to-morrow."

"For how long?"

"For ten days."

"Nothing can be done during that time. Clara Van Siever is going away in a day, and will not be back for three weeks. I happen to know that; so we have plenty of time for working. It would be very desirable that she should never even hear of it; but that cannot be hoped, as Maria has such a tongue! Couldn't you see Mr. Dalrymple to-night?"

"Well, no; I don't think I could."

"Mind, at least, that you come to me as soon as ever you return."

Before he got out of the house, which he did after a most affectionate farewell, Johnny felt himself compelled to promise that he would come to Miss Demolines again as soon as he got back to town; and as the door was closed behind him by the boy in buttons, he made up his mind that he certainly would call as soon as he returned to London. "It's as good as a play," he said to himself. Not that he cared in the least for Miss Demolines, or that he would take any steps with the intention of preventing the painting of the picture. Miss Demolines had some battle to fight, and he would leave her to fight it with her own weapons. If his friend chose to paint a picture of Jael, and take Miss Van Siever as a model, it was no business of his. Nevertheless he would certainly go and see Miss Demolines again, because, as he said, she was as good as a play.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PICTURE.

On that same afternoon Conway Dalrymple rolled up his sketch of Jael and Sisera, put it into his pocket, dressed himself with some considerable care, putting on a velvet coat which he was in the habit of wearing out of doors when he did not intend to wander beyond Kensington Gardens and the neighbourhood, and which was supposed to become him well, yellow gloves, and a certain Spanish hat of which he was fond, and slowly sauntered across to the house of his friend Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. When the door was opened to him he did not ask if the lady were at home, but muttering some word to the servant, made his way through the hall, upstairs, to a certain small sitting-room looking to the north, which was much used by the mistress of the house. It was quite clear that Conway Dalrymple had arranged his visit beforehand, and that he was expected. He opened the door without knocking, and, though the servant had followed him, he entered without being announced. "I'm afraid I'm late," he said, as he gave his hand to Mrs. Broughton; "but for the life I could not get away sooner."

"You are quite in time," said the lady, "for any good that you are likely to do."

"What does that mean?"

"It means this, my friend, that you had better give the idea up. I have been thinking of it all day, and I do not approve of it."

"What nonsense!"

"Of course you will say so, Conway. I have observed of late that whatever I say to you is called nonsense. I suppose it is the new fashion that gentlemen should so express themselves, but I am not quite sure that I like it."

"You know what I mean. I am very anxious about this picture,

and I shall be much disappointed if it cannot be done now. It was you put it into my head first."

"I regret it very much, I can assure you; but it will not be generous in you to urge that against me."

"But why shouldn't it succeed?"

"There are many reasons,—some personal to myself."

"I do not know what they can be. You hinted at something which I only took as having been said in joke."

"If you mean about Miss Van Siever and yourself, I was quite in earnest, Conway. I do not think you could do better, and I should be glad to see it of all things. Nothing would please me more than to bring Miss Van Siever and you together."

"And nothing would please me less."

"But why so?"

"Because,—because——. I can do nothing but tell you the truth, carina; because my heart is not free to present itself at Miss Van Siever's feet."

"It ought to be free, Conway, and you must make it free. It will be well that you should be married, and well for others besides yourself. I tell you so as your friend, and you have no truer friend. Sit where you are, if you please. You can say anything you have to say without stalking about the room."

"I was not going to stalk,—as you call it."

"You will be safer and quieter while you are sitting. I heard a knock at the door, and I do not doubt that it is Clara. She said she would be here."

"And you have told her of the picture?"

"Yes; I have told her. She said that it would be impossible, and that her mother would not allow it. Here she is." Then Miss Van Siever was shown into the room, and Dalrymple perceived that she was a girl the peculiarity of whose complexion bore daylight better even than candlelight. There was something in her countenance which seemed to declare that she could bear any light to which it might be subjected without flinching from it. And her bonnet, which was very plain, and her simple brown morning gown, suited her well. She was one who required none of the circumstances of studied dress to carry off aught in her own appearance. She could look her best when other women look their worst, and could dare to be seen at all times.

Dalrymple, with an artist's eye, saw this at once, and immediately confessed to himself that there was something great about her. He could not deny her beauty. But there was ever present to him that look of hardness which had struck him when he first saw her. He could not but fancy that though at times she might be playful, and allow the fur of her coat to be stroked with good-humour,—she would be a dangerous plaything, using her claws unpleasantly when the good-humour should have passed away. But not the less was she beautiful, and,—beyond that and better than that, for his purpose,—she was picturesque.

"Clara," said Mrs. Broughton, "here is this mad painter, and he says that he will have you on his canvas, either with your will or without it."

"Even if he could do that, I am sure he would not," said Miss Van Siever.

"To prove to you that I can, I think I need only show you the sketch," said Dalrymple, taking the drawing out of his pocket. "As regards the face, I know it so well by heart already, that I feel certain I could produce a likeness without even a sitting. What do you think of it, Mrs. Broughton?"

"It is clever," said she, looking at it with all that enthusiasm which women are able to throw into their eyes on such occasions; "very clever. The subject would just suit her. I have never doubted that."

"Eames says that it is confused," said the artist.

"I don't see that at all," said Mrs. Broughton.

"Of course a sketch must be rough. This one has been rubbed about and altered—but I think there is something in it."

"An immense deal," said Mrs. Broughton. "Don't you think so, Clara?"

"I am not a judge."

"But you can see the woman's fixed purpose; and her stealthiness as well;—and the man sleeps like a log. What is that dim outline?"

"Nothing in particular," said Dalrymple. But the dim outline was intended to represent Mrs. Van Siever.

"It is very good,—unquestionably good," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "I do not for a moment doubt that you would make a

great picture of it. It is just the subject for you, Conway; so much imagination, and yet such a scope for portraiture. It would be full of action, and yet such perfect repose. And the lights and shadows would be exactly in your line. I can see at a glance how you would manage the light in the tent, and bring it down just on the nail. And then the *pose* of the woman would be so good, so much strength, and yet such grace! You should have the bowl he drank the milk out of, so as to tell the whole story. No painter living tells a story so well as you do, Conway." Conway Dalrymple knew that the woman was talking nonsense to him, and yet he liked it, and liked her for talking it.

"But Mr. Dalrymple can paint his Sisera without making me a Jael," said Miss Van Siever.

"Of course he can," said Mrs. Broughton.

"But I never will," said the artist. "I conceived the subject as connected with you, and I will never disjoin the two ideas."

"I think it no compliment, I can assure you," said Miss Van Siever.

"And none was intended. But you may observe that artists in all ages have sought for higher types of models in painting women who have been violent or criminal, than have sufficed for them in their portraitures of gentleness and virtue. Look at all the Judiths, and the Lucretias, and the Charlotte Cordays; how much finer the women are than the Madonnas and the Saint Cecilias."

"After that, Clara, you need not scruple to be a Jael," said Mrs. Broughton.

"But I do scruple,—very much; so strongly that I know I never shall do it. In the first place I don't know why Mr. Dalrymple wants it."

"Want it!" said Conway. "I want to paint a striking picture."

"But you can do that without putting me into it."

"No;—not this picture. And why should you object? It is the commonest thing in the world for ladies to sit to artists in that manner."

"People would know it."

"Nobody would know it, so that you need care about it. What would it matter if everybody knew it? We are not proposing anything improper;—are we, Mrs. Broughton?"

"She shall not be pressed if she does not like it," said Mrs. Broughton. "You know I told you before Clara came in that I was afraid it could not be done."

"And I don't like it," said Miss Van Siever, with some little hesitation in her voice.

"I don't see anything improper in it, if you mean that," said Mrs. Broughton.

"But mamma!"

"Well, yes; that is the difficulty, no doubt. The only question is, whether your mother is not so very singular as to make it impossible that you should comply with her in everything."

"I am afraid that I do not comply with her in very much," said Miss Van Siever, in her gentlest voice.

"Oh, Clara!"

"You drive me to say so, as otherwise I should be a hypocrite. Of course I ought not to have said it before Mr. Dalrymple."

"You and Mr. Dalrymple will understand all about that, I daresay, before the picture is finished," said Mrs. Broughton.

It did not take much persuasion on the part of Conway Dalrymple to get the consent of the younger lady to be painted, or of the elder to allow the sitting to go on in her room. When the question of easels and other apparatus came to be considered Mrs. Broughton was rather flustered, and again declared with energy that the whole thing must fall to the ground; but a few more words from the painter restored her, and at last the arrangements were made. As Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's dear friend, Madalina Demolines, had said, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton liked a fevered existence. "What will Dobbs say?" she exclaimed more than once. And it was decided that Dobbs at last should know nothing about it as long as it could be kept from him. "Of course he shall be told at last," said his wife. "I wouldn't keep anything from the dear fellow for all the world. But if he knew it at first it would be sure to get through Musselboro to your mother."

"I certainly shall beg that Mr. Broughton may not be taken into confidence if Mr. Musselboro is to follow," said Clara. "And it must be understood that I must cease to sit immediately, whatever may be the inconvenience, should mamma speak to me about it."

This stipulation was made and conceded, and then Miss Van Siever went away, leaving the artist with Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "And

now, if you please, Conway, you had better go too," said the lady, as soon as there had been time for Miss Van Siever to get downstairs and out of the hall-door.

"Of course you are in a hurry to get rid of me."

"Yes, I am."

"A little while ago I improperly said that some suggestion of yours was nonsense and you rebuked me for my blunt incivility. Might not I rebuke you now with equal justice?"

"Do so, if you will;—but leave me. I tell you, Conway, that in these matters you must either be guided by me, or you and I must cease to see each other. It does not do that you should remain here with me longer than the time usually allowed for a morning call. Clara has come and gone, and you also must go. I am sorry to disturb you, for you seem to be so very comfortable in that chair."

"I am comfortable,—and I can look at you. Come;—there can be no harm in saying that, if I say nothing else. Well;—there, now I am gone." Whereupon he got up from his arm-chair.

"But you are not gone while you stand there."

"And you would really wish me to marry that girl?"

"I do,—if you can love her."

"And what about her love?"

"You must win it, of course. She is to be won, like any other woman. The fruit won't fall into your mouth merely because you open your lips. You must climb the tree."

"Still climbing trees in the Hesperides," said Conway. "Love does that, you know; but it is hard to climb the trees without the love. It seems to me that I have done my climbing,—have clomb as high as I knew how, and that the boughs are breaking with me, and that I am likely to get a fall. Do you understand me?"

"I would rather not understand you."

"That is no answer to my question. Do you understand that at this moment I am getting a fall which will break every bone in my skin and put any other climbing out of the question as far as I am concerned? Do you understand that?"

"No; I do not," said Mrs. Broughton in a tremulous voice.

"Then I'll go and make love at once to Clara Van Siever. There's enough of pluck left in me to ask her to marry me, and I suppose I could manage to go through the ceremony if she accepted me."

"But I want you to love her," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton.

"I daresay I should love her well enough after a bit;—that is, if she didn't break my head or comb my hair. I suppose there will be no objection to my saying that you sent me when I ask her?"

"Conway, you will of course not mention my name to her. I have suggested to you a marriage which I think would tend to make you happy, and would give you a stability in life which you want. It is perhaps better that I should be explicit at once. As an unmarried man I cannot continue to know you. You have said words of late which have driven me to this conclusion. I have thought about it much,—too much, perhaps, and I know that I am right. Miss Van Siever has beauty and wealth, and intellect, and I think that she would appreciate the love of such a man as you are. Now go." And Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, standing upright, pointed to the door. Conway Dalrymple slowly took his Spanish hat from off the marble slab on which he had laid it, and left the room without saying a word. The interview had been quite long enough, and there was nothing else which he knew how to say with effect.

Croquet is a pretty game out of doors, and chess is delightful in a drawing-room. Battledore and shuttlecock and hunt the slipper have also their attractions. Proverbs are good, and cross questions with crooked answers may be made very amusing. But none of these games are equal to the game of love-making,—providing that the players can be quite sure that there shall be no heart in the matter. Any touch of heart not only destroys the pleasure of the game, but makes the player awkward and incapable and robs him of his skill. And thus it is that there are many people who cannot play the game at all. A deficiency of some needed internal physical strength prevents the owners of the heart from keeping a proper control over its valves, and thus emotion sets in, and the pulses are accelerated, and feeling supervenes. For such a one to attempt a game of love-making, is as though your friend with the gout should insist on playing croquet. A sense of the ridiculous, if nothing else, should in either case deter the afflicted one from the attempt. There was no such absurdity with our friend Mrs. Dobbs Broughton and Conway Dalrymple. Their valves and pulses were all right. They could play the game without the slightest danger of any inconvenient result;—of any inconvenient result, that is, as regarded their own feelings. Blind people cannot see and stupid people cannot

understand,—and it might be that Mr. Dobbs Broughton, being both blind and stupid in such matters, might perceive something of the playing of the game and not know that it was only a game of skill.

When I say that as regarded these two lovers there was nothing of love between them, and that the game was therefore so far innocent, I would not be understood as asserting that these people had no hearts within their bosoms. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton probably loved her husband in a sensible, humdrum way, feeling him to be a bore, knowing him to be vulgar, aware that he often took a good deal more wine than was good for him, and that he was almost as uneducated as a hog. Yet she loved him, and showed her love by taking care that he should have things for dinner which he liked to eat. But in this alone there were to be found none of the charms of a fevered existence, and therefore Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, requiring those charms for her comfort, played her little game with Conway Dalrymple. And as regarded the artist himself, let no reader presume him to have been heartless because he flirted with Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. Doubtless he will marry some day, will have a large family for which he will work hard, and will make a good husband to some stout lady who will be careful in looking after his linen. But on the present occasion he fell into some slight trouble in spite of the innocence of his game. As he quitted his friend's room he heard the hall-door slammed heavily; then there was a quick step on the stairs, and on the landing-place above the first flight he met the master of the house, somewhat flurried, as it seemed, and not looking comfortable, either as regarded his person or his temper. "By George, he's been drinking!" Conway said to himself, after the first glance. Now it certainly was the case that poor Dobbs Broughton would sometimes drink at improper hours.

"What the devil are you doing here?" said Dobbs Broughton to his friend the artist. "You're always here. You're here a doosed sight more than I like." Husbands when they have been drinking are very apt to make mistakes as to the purport of the game.

"Why, Dobbs," said the painter, "there's something wrong with you."

"No, there ain't. There's nothing wrong; and if there was, what's that to you? I shan't ask you to pay anything for me, I suppose."

"Well;—I hope not."

"I won't have you here, and let that be an end of it. It's all very

well when I choose to have a few friends to dinner, but my wife can do very well without your fal-lalling here all day. Will you remember that, if you please?"

Conway Dalrymple, knowing that he had better not argue any question with a drunken man, took himself out of the house, shrugging his shoulders as he thought of the misery which his poor dear playfellow would now be called upon to endure.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A HERO AT HOME.

On the morning after his visit to Miss Demolines John Eames found himself at the Paddington station asking for a ticket for Guestwick, and as he picked up his change another gentleman also demanded a ticket for the same place. Had Guestwick been as Liverpool or Manchester, Eames would have thought nothing about it. It is a matter of course that men should always be going from London to Liverpool and Manchester; but it seemed odd to him that two men should want first-class tickets for so small a place as Guestwick at the same moment. And when, afterwards, he was placed by the guard in the same carriage with this other traveller, he could not but feel some little curiosity. The man was four or five years Johnny's senior, a good-looking fellow, with a pleasant face, and the outward appurtenances of a gentleman. The intelligent reader will no doubt be aware that the stranger was Major Grantly; but the intelligent reader has in this respect had much advantage over John Eames, who up to this time had never even heard of his cousin Grace Crawley's lover. "I think you were asking for a ticket for Guestwick?" said Johnny; whereupon the Major owned that such was the case. "I lived at Guestwick the greater part of my life," said Johnny, "and it's the

dullest, dearest little town in all England." "I never was there before," said the major, "and indeed I can hardly say I am going there now. I shall only pass through it." Then he got out his newspaper, and Johnny also got out his, and for a time there was no conversation between them. John remembered how holy was the errand upon which he was intent, and gathered his thoughts together, resolving that having so great a matter on his mind he would think about nothing else and speak about nothing at all. He was going down to Allington to ask Lily Dale for the last time whether she would be his wife; to ascertain whether he was to be successful or unsuccessful in the one great wish of his life; and, as such was the case with him,—as he had in hand a thing so vital, it could be nothing to him whether the chance companion of his voyage was an agreeable or a disagreeable person. He himself, in any of the ordinary circumstances of life, was prone enough to talk with any one he might meet. He could have travelled for twelve hours together with an old lady, and could listen to her or make her listen to him without half an hour's interruption. But this journey was made on no ordinary occasion, and it behoved him to think of Lily. Therefore, after the first little almost necessary effort at civility, he fell back into gloomy silence. He was going to do his best to win Lily Dale, and this doing of his best would require all his thought and all his energy.

And probably Major Grantly's mind was bent in the same direction. He, too, had his work before him, and could not look upon his work as a thing that was altogether pleasant. He might probably get that which he was intent upon obtaining. He knew,—he almost knew,—that he had won the heart of the girl whom he was seeking. There had been that between him and her which justified him in supposing that he was dear to her, although no expression of affection had ever passed from her lips to his ears. Men may know all that they require to know on that subject without any plainly spoken words. Grace Crawley had spoken no word, and yet he had known,—at any rate had not doubted, that he could have the place in her heart of which he desired to be the master. She would never surrender herself altogether till she had taught herself to be sure of him to whom she gave herself. But she had listened to him with silence that had not rebuked him, and he had told himself that he might venture, without fear of that rebuke as to which the minds of some men are sensitive

to a degree which other men cannot even understand. But for all this Major Grantly could not be altogether happy as to his mission. He would ask Grace Crawley to be his wife; but he would be ruined by his own success. And the remembrance that he would be severed from all his own family by the thing that he was doing, was very bitter to him. In generosity he might be silent about this to Grace, but who can endure to be silent on such a subject to the woman who is to be his wife? And then it would not be possible for him to abstain from explanation. He was now following her down to Allington, a step which he certainly would not have taken but for the misfortune which had befallen her father, and he must explain to her in some sort why he did so. He must say to her,—if not in so many words, still almost as plainly as words could speak,—I am here now to ask you to be my wife, because you specially require the protection and countenance of the man who loves yóu, in the present circumstances of your father's affairs. He knew that he was doing right;—perhaps had sôme idea that he was doing nobly; but this very appreciation of his own good qualities made the task before him the more difficult.

Major Grantly had *The Times*, and John Eames had the *Daily News*, and they exchanged papers. One had the last *Saturday*, and the other the last *Spectator*, and they exchanged those also. Then at last when they were within half-an hour of the end of their journey, Major Grantly asked his companion what was the best inn at Guestwick. He had at first been minded to go on to Allington at once,—to go on to Allington and get his work done, and then return home or remain there, or find the nearest inn with a decent bed, as circumstances might direct him. But on reconsideration, as he drew nearer to the scene of his future operations, he thought that it might be well for him to remain that night at Guestwick. He did not quite know how far Allington was from Guestwick, but he did know that it was still mid-winter, and that the days were very short. "The Magpie" was the best inn, Johnny said. Having lived at Guestwick all his life, and having a mother living there now, he had never himself put up at "The Magpie," but he believed it to be a good country inn. They kept post-horses there, he knew. He did not tell the stranger that his late old friend Lord De Guest, and his present old friend, Lady Julia, always hired post-horses from "The Magpie," but he grounded his ready assertion on the remembrance of that fact. "I think I shall stay there to-night," said

the major. "You'll find it pretty comfortable, I don't doubt," said Johnny. "Though, indeed, it always seems to me that a man alone at an inn has a very bad time of it. Reading is all very well, but one gets tired of it at last. And then I hate horse-hair chairs." "It isn't very delightful," said the major, "but beggars mustn't be choosers." Then there was a pause, after which the major spoke again. "You don't happen to know which way Allington lies?"

"Allington!" said Johnny.

"Yes, Allington. Is there not a village called Allington?"

"There is a village called Allington, certainly. It lies over there." And Johnny pointed with his finger through the window. "As you do not know the country you can see nothing, but I can see the Allington trees at this moment."

"I suppose there is no inn at Allington?"

"There's a public-house, with a very nice clean bedroom. It is called the 'Red Lion.' Mrs. Forrard keeps it. I would quite as soon stay there as at 'The Magpie.' Only if they don't expect you, they wouldn't have much for dinner."

"Then you know the village of Allington?"

"Yes, I know the village of Allington very well. I have friends living there. Indeed, I may say I know everybody in Allington."

"Do you know Mrs. Dale?"

"Mrs. Dale?" said Johnny. "Yes, I know Mrs. Dale. I have known Mrs. Dale pretty nearly all my life." Who could this man be who was going down to see Mrs. Dale,—Mrs. Dale, and consequently, Lily Dale? He thought that he knew Mrs. Dale so well, that she could have no visitor of whom he would not be entitled to have some knowledge. But Major Grantly had nothing more to say at the moment about Mrs. Dale. He had never seen Mrs. Dale in his life, and was now going to her house, not to see her, but a friend of hers. He found that he could not very well explain this to a stranger, and therefore at the moment he said nothing further. But Johnny would not allow the subject to be dropped. "Have you known Mrs. Dale long?" he asked.

"I have not the pleasure of knowing her at all," said the major.

"I thought, perhaps, by your asking after her——"

"I intend to call upon her, that is all. I suppose they will have an omnibus here from 'The Magpie?'" Eames said that there no doubt

would be an omnibus from "The Magpie," and then they were at their journey's end.

For the present we will follow John Eames who went at once to his mother's house. It was his intention to remain there for two or three days, and then go over to the house, or rather to the cottage, of his great ally Lady Julia, which lay just beyond Guestwick Manor, and somewhat nearer to Allington than to the town of Guestwick. He had made up his mind that he would not himself go over to Allington till he could do so from Guestwick Cottage, as it was called, feeling that, under certain untoward circumstances,—should untoward circumstances arise,—Lady Julia's sympathy might be more endurable than that of his mother. But he would take care that it should be known at Allington that he was in the neighbourhood. He understood the necessary strategy of his campaign too well to suppose that he could startle Lily into acquiescence.

With his own mother and sister John Eames was in these days quite a hero. He was a hero with them now, because in his early boyish days there had been so little about him that was heroic. Then there had been a doubt whether he would ever earn his daily bread, and he had been a very heavy burden on the slight family resources in the matter of jackets and trousers. The pride taken in our Johnny had not been great, though the love felt for him had been warm. But gradually things had changed, and John Eames had become heroic in his mother's eyes. A chance circumstance had endeared him to Earl De Guest, and from that moment things had gone well with him. The earl had given him a watch and had left him a fortune, and Sir Raffle Buffle had made him a private secretary. In the old days, when Johnny's love for Lily Dale was first discussed by his mother and sister, they had thought it impossible that Lily should ever bring herself to regard with affection so humble a suitor;—for the Dales have ever held their heads up in the world. But now there is no misgiving on that score with Mrs. Eames and her daughter. Their wonder is that Lily Dale should be such a fool as to decline the love of such a man. So Johnny was received with the respect due to a hero, as well as with the affection belonging to a son;—by which I mean it to be inferred that Mrs. Eames had got a little bit of fish for dinner as well as a leg of mutton.

"A man came down in the train with me who says he is going over

to Allington," said Johnny. "I wonder who he can be. He is staying at 'The Magpie.'"

"A friend of Captain Dale's, probably," said Mary. Captain Dale was the squire's nephew and his heir.

"But this man was not going to the squire's. He was going to the Small House."

"Is he going to stay there?"

"I suppose not, as he asked about the inn." Then Johnny reflected that the man might probably be a friend of Crosbie's, and became melancholy in consequence. Crosbie might have thought it expedient to send an ambassador down to prepare the ground for him before he should venture again upon the scene himself. If it were so, would it not be well that he, John Eames, should get over to Lily as soon as possible, and not wait till he should be staying with Lady Julia?

It was at any rate incumbent upon him to call upon Lady Julia the next morning, because of his commission. The Berlin wool might remain in his portmanteau till his portmanteau should go with him to the cottage; but he would take the spectacles at once, and he must explain to Lady Julia what the lawyers had told him about the income. So he hired a saddle-horse from "The Magpie" and started after breakfast on the morning after his arrival. In his unheroic days he would have walked,—as he had done, scores of times, over the whole distance from Guestwick to Allington. But now in these grander days, he thought about his boots and the mud, and the formal appearance of the thing. "Ah dear," he said, to himself, as the nag walked slowly out of the town, "it used to be better with me in the old days. I hardly hoped that she would ever accept me, but at least she had never refused me. And then that brute had not as yet made his way down to Allington!"

He did not go very fast. After leaving the town he trotted on for a mile or so. But when he got to the palings of Guestwick Manor he let the animal walk again, and his mind ran back over the incidents of his life which were connected with the place. He remembered a certain long ramble which he had taken in those woods after Lily had refused him. That had been subsequent to the Crosbie episode in his life, and Johnny had been led to hope by certain of his friends,—especially by Lord De Guest and his sister,—that he might then be successful. But he had been unsuccessful, and had passed the bitterest

hour of his life wandering about in those woods. Since that he had been unsuccessful again and again; but the bitterness of failure had not been so strong with him as on that first occasion. He would try again now, and if he failed, he would fail for the last time. As he was thinking of all this, a gig overtook him on the road, and on looking round he saw that the occupant of the gig was the man who had travelled with him on the previous day in the train. Major Grantly was alone in the gig, and as he recognized John Eames he stopped his horse. "Are you also going to Allington?" he asked. John Eames, with something of scorn in his voice, replied that he had no intention of going to Allington on that day. He still thought that this man might be an emissary from Crosbie, and therefore resolved that but scant courtsey was due to him. "I am on my way there now," said Grantly, "and am going to the house of your friend. May I tell her that I travelled with you yesterday?"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny. "You may tell her that you came down with John Eames."

"And are you John Eames?" asked the major.

"If you have no objection," said Johnny. "But I can hardly suppose you have ever heard my name before?"

"It is familiar to me, because I have the pleasure of knowing a cousin of yours, Miss Grace Crawley."

"My cousin is at present staying at Allington with Mrs. Dale," said Johnny.

"Just so," said the major, who now began to reflect that he had been indiscreet in mentioning Grace Crawley's name. No doubt every one connected with the family, all the Crawleys, all the Dales, and all the Eameses, would soon know the business which had brought him down to Allington; but he need not have taken the trouble of beginning the story against himself. John Eames, in truth, had never even heard Major Grantly's name, and was quite unaware of the fortune which awaited his cousin. Even after what he had now been told, he still suspected the stranger of being an emissary from his enemy; but the major, not giving him credit for his ignorance, was annoyed with himself for having told so much of his own history. "I will tell the ladies that I had the pleasure of meeting you," he said; "that is, if I am lucky enough to see them." And then he drove on.

"I know I should hate that fellow if I were to meet him anywhere

again," said Johnny to himself as he rode on. "When I take an aversion to a fellow at first sight, I always stick to it. It's instinct, I suppose." And he was still giving himself credit for the strength of his instincts when he reached Lady Julia's cottage. He rode at once into the stableyard, with the privilege of an accustomed friend of the house, and having given up his horse, entered the cottage by the back door. "Is my lady at home, Jemima?" he said to the maid.

"Yes, Mr. John; she is in the drawing-room, and friends of yours are with her." Then he was announced, and found himself in the presence of Lady Julia, Lily Dale, and Grace Crawley.

He was very warmly received. Lady Julia really loved him dearly, and would have done anything in her power to bring about a match between him and Lily. Grace was his cousin, and though she had not seen him often, she was prepared to love him dearly as Lily's lover. And Lily,—Lily loved him dearly too,—if only she could have brought herself to love him as he wished to be loved! To all of them Johnny Eames was something of a hero. At any rate in the eyes of all of them he possessed those virtues which seemed to them to justify them in petting him and making much of him.

"I am so glad you've come,—that is, if you've brought my spectacles," said Lady Julia.

"My pockets are crammed with spectacles," said Johnny.

"And when are you coming to me?"

"I was thinking of Tuesday."

"No; don't come till Wednesday But I mean Monday. No; Monday won't do. Come on Tuesday early, and drive me out. And now tell us the news."

Johnny swore that there was no news. He made a brave attempt to be gay and easy before Lily; but he failed,—and he knew that he failed,—and he knew that she knew that he failed. "Mamma will be so glad to see you," said Lily. "I suppose you haven't seen Bell yet?"

"I only got to Guestwick yesterday afternoon," said he.

"And it will be so nice our having Grace at the Small House,—won't it? Uncle Christopher has quite taken a passion for Grace,—so that I am hardly anybody now in the Allington world."

"By-the-by," said Johnny, "I came down here with a friend of yours, Grace."

"A friend of mine?" said Grace.

"So he says, and he is at Allington at this moment. He passed me in a gig going there."

"And what is his name?" Lily asked.

"I have not the remotest idea," said Johnny. "He is a man about my own age, very good-looking, and apparently very well able to take care of himself. He is short-sighted, and holds a glass in one eye when he looks out of a carriage-window. That's all that I know about him."

Grace Crawley's face had become suffused with blushes at the first mention of the friend and the gig; but then Grace blushed very easily. Lily knew all about it at once,—at once divined who must be the friend in the gig, and was almost beside herself with joy. Lady Julia, who had heard no more of the major than had Johnny, was still clever enough to perceive that the friend must be a particular friend,—for she had noticed Miss Crawley's blushes. And Grace herself had no doubt as to the man. The picture of her lover, with the glass in his eye as he looked out of the window, had been too perfect to admit of a doubt. In her distress she put out her hand and took hold of Lily's dress.

"And you say he is at Allington now?" said Lily.

"I have no doubt he is at the Small House at this moment," said Johnny.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHOWING HOW MAJOR GRANTLY TOOK A WALK.

MAJOR GRANTLY drove his gig into the yard of the "Red Lion" at Allington, and from thence walked away at once to Mrs. Dale's house. When he reached the village he had hardly made up his mind as to the way in which he would begin his attack; but now, as he went down the street, he resolved that he would first ask for Mrs. Dale.

Most probably he would find himself in the presence of Mrs. Dale and her daughter, and of Grace also, at his first entrance; and if so, his position would be awkward enough. He almost regretted now that he had not written to Mrs. Dale, and asked for an interview. His task would be very difficult if he should find all the ladies together. But he was strong in the feeling that when his purpose was told it would meet the approval at any rate of Mrs. Dale; and he walked boldly on, and bravely knocked at the door of the Small House, as he had already learned that Mrs. Dale's residence was called by all the neighbourhood. Nobody was at home, the servant said; and then, when the visitor began to make further inquiry, the girl explained that the two young ladies had walked as far as Guestwick Cottage, and that Mrs. Dale was at this moment at the Great House with the squire. She had gone across soon after the young ladies had started. The maid, however, was interrupted before she had finished telling all this to the major, by finding her mistress behind her in the passage. Mrs. Dale had returned, and had entered the house from the lawn.

"I am here now, Jane," said Mrs. Dale, "if the gentleman wishes to see me."

Then the major announced himself. "My name is Major Grantly," said he; and he was blundering on with some words about his own intrusion, when Mrs. Dale begged him to follow her into the drawing-room. He had muttered something to the effect that Mrs. Dale would not know who he was; but Mrs. Dale knew all about him, and had heard the whole of Grace's story from Lily. She and Lily had often discussed the question whether, under existing circumstances, Major Grantly should feel himself bound to offer his hand to Grace, and the mother and daughter had differed somewhat on the matter. Mrs. Dale had held that he was not so bound, urging that the unfortunate position in which Mr. Crawley was placed was so calamitous to all connected with him, as to justify any man, not absolutely engaged, in abandoning the thoughts of such a marriage. Mrs. Dale had spoken of Major Grantly's father and mother and brother and sister, and had declared her opinion that they were entitled to consideration. But Lily had opposed this idea very stoutly, asserting that in an affair of love a man should think neither of father or brother or mother or sister. "If he is worth anything," Lily had said, "he will come to her now,—now in her trouble; and will tell her that she

at least has got a friend who will be true to her. If he does that, then I shall think that there is something of the poetry and nobleness of love left." In answer to this Mrs. Dale had replied that women had no right to expect from men such self-denying nobility as that. "I don't expect it, mamma," said Lily. "And I am sure that Grace does not. Indeed I am quite sure that Grace does not expect even to see him ever again. She never says so, but I know that she has made up her mind about it. Still I think he ought to come." "It can hardly be that a man is bound to do a thing, the doing of which, as you confess, would be almost more than noble," said Mrs. Dale. And so the matter had been discussed between them. But now, as it seemed to Mrs. Dale, the man had come to do this noble thing. At any rate he was there in her drawing-room, and before either of them had sat down he had contrived to mention Grace. "You may not probably have heard my name," he said, "but I am acquainted with your friend, Miss Crawley."

"I know your name very well, Major Grantly. My brother-in-law who lives over yonder, Mr. Dale, knows your father very well,—or he did some years ago. And I have heard him say that he remembers you."

"I recollect. He used to be staying at Ullathorne. But that is a long time ago. Is he at home now?"

"Mr. Dale is almost always at home. He very rarely goes away, and I am sure would be glad to see you."

Then there was a little pause in the conversation. They had managed to seat themselves, and Mrs. Dale had said enough to put her visitor fairly at his ease. If he had anything special to say to her, he must say it;—any request or proposition to make as to Grace Crawley, he must make it. And he did make it at once. "My object in coming to Allington," he said, "was to see Miss Crawley."

"She and my daughter have taken a long walk to call on a friend, and I am afraid they will stay for lunch; but they will certainly be home between three and four, if that is not too long for you to remain at Allington."

"O dear, no," said he. "It will not hurt me to wait."

"It certainly will not hurt me, Major Grantly. Perhaps you will lunch with me?"

"I'll tell you what, Mrs. Dale; if you'll permit me, I'll explain to you why I have come here. Indeed, I have intended to do so all through, and I can only ask you to keep my secret, if after all it should require to be kept."

"I will certainly keep any secret that you may ask me to keep," said Mrs. Dale, taking off her bonnet.

"I hope there may be no need of one," said Major Grantly. "The truth is, Mrs. Dale, that I have known Miss Crawley for some time,—nearly for two years now, and,—I may as well speak it out at once,—I have made up my mind to ask her to be my wife. That is why I am here." Considering the nature of the statement, which must have been embarrassing, I think that it was made with fluency and simplicity.

"Of course, Major Grantly, you know that I have no authority with our young friend," said Mrs. Dale. "I mean that she is not connected with us by family ties. She has a father and mother, living, as I believe, in the same county with yourself."

"I know that, Mrs. Dale."

"And you may, perhaps, understand that, as Miss Crawley is now staying with me, I owe it in a measure to her friends to ask you whether they are aware of your intention."

"They are not aware of it."

"I know that at the present moment they are in great trouble."

Mrs. Dale was going on, but she was interrupted by Major Grantly.

"That is just it," he said. "There are circumstances at present which make it almost impossible that I should go to Mr. Crawley and ask his permission to address his daughter. I do not know whether you have heard the whole story?"

"As much, I believe, as Grace could tell me."

"He is, I believe, in such a state of mental distress as to be hardly capable of giving me a considerate answer. And I should not know how to speak to him, or how not to speak to him, about this unfortunate affair. But, Mrs. Dale, you will, I think, perceive that the same circumstances make it imperative upon me to be explicit to Miss Crawley. I think I am the last man to boast of a woman's regard, but I had learned to think that I was not indifferent to Grace. If that be so, what must she think of me if I stay away from her now?"

"She understands too well the weight of the misfortune which has

fallen upon her father to suppose that any one not connected with her can be bound to share it."

"That is just it. She will think that I am silent for that reason. I have determined that that shall not keep me silent, and, therefore, I have come here. I may, perhaps, be able to bring comfort to her in her trouble. As regards my worldly position,—though, indeed, it will not be very good,—as hers is not good either, you will not think yourself bound to forbid me to see her on that head."

"Certainly not. I need hardly say that I fully understand that, as regards money, you are offering everything where you can get nothing."

"And you understand my feeling?"

"Indeed I do,—and appreciate the great nobility of your love for Grace. You shall see her here, if you wish it,—and to-day if you choose to wait." Major Grantly said that he would wait and would see Grace on that afternoon. Mrs. Dale again suggested that he should lunch with her, but this he declined. She then proposed that he should go across and call upon the squire, and thus consume his time. But to this he also objected. He was not exactly in the humour, he said, to renew so old and so slight an acquaintance at that time. Mr. Dale would probably have forgotten him, and would be sure to ask what had brought him to Allington. He would go and take a walk, he said, and come again exactly at four. Mrs. Dale again expressed her certainty that the young ladies would be back by that time, and Major Grantly left the house.

Mrs. Dale when she was left alone could not but compare the good fortune which was awaiting Grace, with the evil fortune which had fallen on her own child. Here was a man who was at all points a gentleman. Such, at least, was the character which Mrs. Dale at once conceded to him. And Grace had chanced to come across this man, and to please his eye, and satisfy his taste, and be loved by him. And the result of that chance would be that Grace would have everything given to her that the world has to give worth acceptance. She would have a companion for her life whom she could trust, admire, love, and of whom she could be infinitely proud. Mrs. Dale was not at all aware whether Major Grantly might have five hundred a year to spend, or five thousand,—or what sum intermediate between the two,—nor did she give much of her thoughts at the moment to that side of the subject. She knew without thinking of it,—or fancied that she

knew, that there were means sufficient for comfortable living. It was solely the nature and character of the man that was in her mind, and the sufficiency that was to be found in them for a wife's happiness. But her daughter, her Lily, had come across a man who was a scoundrel, and, as the consequence of that meeting, all her life was marred! Could any credit be given to Grace for her success, or any blame attached to Lily for her failure? Surely not the latter! How was her girl to have guarded herself from a love so unfortunate, or have avoided the rock on which her vessel had been shipwrecked? Then many bitter thoughts passed through Mrs. Dale's mind, and she almost envied Grace Crawley her lover. Lily was contented to remain as she was, but Lily's mother could not bring herself to be satisfied that her child should fill a lower place in the world than other girls. It had ever been her idea,—an idea probably never absolutely uttered even to herself, but not the less practically conceived,—that it is the business of a woman to be married. That her Lily should have been won and not worn, had been, and would be, a trouble to her for ever.

Major Grantly went back to the inn and saw his horse fed, and smoked a cigar, and then, finding that it was still only just one o'clock, he started for a walk. He was careful not to go out of Allington by the road he had entered it, as he had no wish to encounter Grace and her friend on their return into the village; so he crossed a little brook which runs at the bottom of the hill on which the chief street of Allington is built, and turned into a field-path to the left as soon as he had got beyond the houses. Not knowing the geography of the place he did not understand that by taking that path he was making his way back to the squire's house; but it was so; and after sauntering on for about a mile and crossing back again over the stream, of which he took no notice, he found himself leaning across a gate, and looking into a paddock on the other side of which was the high wall of a gentleman's garden. To avoid this he went on a little further and found himself on a farm road, and before he could retrace his steps so as not to be seen, he met a gentleman whom he presumed to be the owner of the house. It was the squire surveying his home farm, as was his daily custom; but Major Grantly had not perceived that the house must of necessity be Allington House, having been aware that he had passed the entrance to the place, as he entered the village on the other side. "I'm afraid I'm

intruding," he said, lifting his hat. "I came up the path yonder, not knowing that it would lead me so close to a gentleman's house.

"There is a right of way through the fields on to the Guestwick road," said the squire, "and therefore you are not trespassing in any sense; but we are not particular about such things down here, and you would be very welcome if there were no right of way. If you are a stranger, perhaps you would like to see the outside of the old house. People think it picturesque."

Then Major Grantly became aware that this must be the squire, and he was annoyed with himself for his own awkwardness in having thus come upon the house. He would have wished to keep himself altogether unseen if it had been possible,—and especially unseen by this old gentleman, to whom, now that he had met him, he was almost bound to introduce himself. But he was not absolutely bound to do so, and he determined that he would still keep his peace. Even if the squire should afterwards hear of his having been there, what would it matter? But to proclaim himself at the present moment would be disagreeable to him. He permitted the squire, however, to lead him to the front of the house, and in a few moments was standing on the terrace hearing an account of the architecture of the mansion.

"You can see the date still in the brickwork of one of the chimneys, —that is, if your eyes are very good you can see it,—1617. It was completed in that year, and very little has been done to it since. We think the chimneys are pretty."

"They are very pretty," said the major. "Indeed, the house altogether is as graceful as it can be."

"Those trees are old, too," said the squire, pointing to two cedars which stood at the side of the house. "They say they are older than the house, but I don't feel sure of it. There was a mansion here before, very nearly, though not quite, on the same spot."

"Your own ancestors were living here before that, I suppose?" said Grantly, meaning to be civil.

"Well, yes; two or three hundred years before it, I suppose. If you don't mind coming down to the churchyard, you'll get an excellent view of the house;—by far the best that there is. By-the-by, would you like to step in and take a glass of wine?"

"I'm very much obliged," said the major, "but indeed I'd rather

not." Then he followed the squire down to the churchyard, and was shown the church as well as the view of the house, and the vicarage, and a view over to Allington woods from the vicarage gate, of which the squire was very fond, and in this way he was taken back on to the Guestwick side of the village, and even down on to the road by which he had entered it, without in the least knowing where he was. He looked at his watch and saw that it was past two. "I'm very much obliged to you, sir," he said, again taking off his hat to the squire, "and if I shall not be intruding I'll make my way back to the village."

"What village?" said the squire.

"To Allington," said Grantly.

"This is Allington," said the squire; and as he spoke, Lily Dale and Grace Crawley turned a corner from the Guestwick road and came close upon them. "Well, girls, I did not expect to see you," said the squire; "your mamma told me you wouldn't be back till it was nearly dark, Lily."

"We have come back earlier than we intended," said Lily. She of course had seen the stranger with her uncle, and knowing the ways of the squire in such matters had expected to be introduced to him. But the reader will be aware that no introduction was possible. It never occurred to Lily that this man could be the Major Grantly of whom she and Grace had been talking during the whole length of the walk home. But Grace and her lover had of course known each other at once, and Grantly, though he was abashed and almost dismayed by the meeting, of course came forward and gave his hand to his friend. Grace in taking it did not utter a word.

"Perhaps I ought to have introduced myself to you as Major Grantly?" said he, turning to the squire.

"Major Grantly! Dear me! I had no idea that you were expected in these parts."

"I have come without being expected."

"You are very welcome, I'm sure. I hope your father is well? I used to know him some years ago, and I daresay he has not forgotten me." Then, while the girls stood by in silence, and while Grantly was endeavouring to escape, the squire invited him very warmly to send his portmanteau up to the house. We'll have the ladies up from the house below, and make it as little dull for you as possible." But this would not have suited Grantly,—at any rate would not suit him till he

should know what answer he was to have. He excused himself therefore, pleading a positive necessity to be at Guestwick that evening, and then, explaining that he had already seen Mrs. Dale, he expressed his intention of going back to the Small House in company with the ladies, if they would allow him. The squire, who did not as yet quite understand it all, bade him a formal adieu, and Lily led the way home down behind the churchyard wall and through the bottom of the gardens belonging to the Great House. She of course knew now who the stranger was, and did all in her power to relieve Grace of her embarrassment. Grace had hitherto not spoken a single word since she had seen her lover, nor did she say a word to him in their walk to the house. And, in truth, he was not much more communicative than Grace. Lily did all the talking, and with wonderful female skill contrived to have some words ready for use till they all found themselves together in Mrs. Dale's drawing-room. "I have caught a major, mamma, and landed him," said Lily laughing; "but I'm afraid, from what I hear, that you had caught him first."

CHAPTER XXIX.

MISS LILY DALE'S LOGIC.

Lady Julia De Guest always lunched at one exactly, and it was not much past twelve when John Eames made his appearance at the cottage. He was of course told to stay, and of course said that he would stay. It had been his purpose to lunch with Lady Julia; but then he had not expected to find Lily Dale at the cottage. Lily herself would have been quite at her ease, protected by Lady Julia, and somewhat protected also by her own powers of fence, had it not been that Grace was there also. But Grace Crawley, from the moment that she had heard the description of the gentleman who looked out

of the window with his glass in his eye, had by no means been at her ease. Lily saw at once that she could not be brought to join in any conversation, and both John and Lady Julia, in their ignorance of the matter in hand, made matters worse.

"So that was Major Grantly?" said John. "I have heard of him before, I think. He is a son of the old archdeacon, is he not?"

"I don't know about old archdeacon," said Lady Julia. "The archdeacon is the son of the old bishop, whom I remember very well. And it is not so very long since the bishop died either."

"I wonder what he's doing at Allington?" said Johnny.

"I think he knows my uncle," said Lily.

"But he's going to call on your mother," he said. Then Johnny remembered that the major had said something as to knowing Miss Crawley, and for the moment he was silent.

"I remember when they talked of making the son a bishop also," said Lady Julia.

"What;—this same man who is now a major?" said Johnny.

"No, you goose. He is not the son; he is the grandson. They were going to make the archdeacon a bishop, and I remember hearing that he was terribly disappointed. He is getting to be an old man now, I suppose; and yet, dear me, how well I remember his father."

"He didn't look like a bishop's son," said Johnny.

"How does a bishop's son look?" Lily asked.

"I suppose he ought to have some sort of clerical tinge about him; but this fellow had nothing of that kind."

"But then this fellow, as you call him," said Lily, "is only the son of an archdeacon."

"That accounts for it, I suppose," said Johnny.

But during all this time Grace did not say a word, and Lily perceived it. Then she bethought herself as to what she had better do. Grace, she knew, could not be comfortable where she was. Nor, indeed, was it probable that Grace would be very comfortable in returning home. There could not be much ease for Grace till the coming meeting between her and Major Grantly should be over. But it would be better that Grace should go back to Allington at once; and better also, perhaps, for Major Grantly that it should be so. "Lady Julia," she said, "I don't think we'll mind stopping for lunch to-day."

"Nonsense, my dear; you promised."

"I think we must break our promise; I do indeed. You mustn't be angry with us." And Lily looked at Lady Julia, as though there were something which Lady Julia ought to understand, which she, Lily, could not quite explain. I fear that Lily was false, and intended her old friend to believe that she was running away because John Eames had come there.

"But you will be famished," said Lady Julia.

"We shall live through it," said Lily.

"It is out of the question that I should let you walk all the way here from Allington and all the way back without taking something."

"We shall just be home in time for lunch if we go now," said Lily. "Will not that be best, Grace?"

Grace hardly knew what would be best. She only knew that Major Grantly was at Allington, and that he had come thither to see her. The idea of hurrying back after him was unpleasant to her, and yet she was so flurried that she felt thankful to Lily for taking her away from the cottage. The matter was compromised at last. They remained for half an hour, and ate some biscuits, and pretended to drink a glass of wine, and then they started. John Eames, who in truth believed that Lily Dale was running away from him, was by no means well pleased, and when the girls were gone, did not make himself so agreeable to his old friend as he should have done. "What a fool I am to come here at all," he said, throwing himself into an arm-chair as soon as the front door was closed.

"That's very civil to me, John!"

"You know what I mean, Lady Julia. I am a fool to come near her, until I can do so without thinking more of her than I do of any other girl in the county."

"I don't think you have anything to complain of as yet," said Lady Julia, who had in some sort perceived that Lily's retreat had been on Grace's account, and not on her own. "It seems to me that Lily was very glad to see you, and when I told her that you were coming to stay here, and would be near them for some days, she seemed to be quite pleased,—she did indeed."

"Then why did she run away the moment I came in?" said Johnny.

"I think it was something you said about that man who has gone to Allington."

"What difference can the man make to her? The truth is, I despise myself,—I do indeed, Lady Julia. Only think of my meeting Crosbie at dinner the other day, and his having the impertinence to come up and shake hands with me."

"I suppose he didn't say anything about what happened at the Paddington Station?"

"No; he didn't speak about that. I wish I knew whether she cares for him still. If I thought she did, I would never speak another word to her,—I mean about myself. Of course I am not going to quarrel with them. I am not such a fool as that." Then Lady Julia tried to comfort him, and succeeded so far that he was induced to eat the mince veal that had been intended for the comfort and support of the two young ladies who had run away.

"Do you think it is he?" were the first words which Grace said when they were fairly on their way back together.

"Of course it is he;—did you not hear what they said?"

"His coming was so unlikely. I cannot understand that he should come. He let me leave Silverbridge without seeing me,—and I thought that he was quite right."

"And I think he is quite right to come here. I am very glad he has come. It shows that he has really something like a heart inside him. Had he not come, or sent, or written, or taken some step before the trial comes on to make you know that he was thinking of you, I should have said that he was as hard,—as hard as any other man that I ever heard of. Men are so hard! But I don't think he is, now. I am beginning to regard him as the one chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche*, and to fancy that you ought to go down on your knees before him, and kiss his highness's shoebuckle. In judging of men one's mind vacillates so quickly between the scorn which is due to a false man and the worship which is due to a true man." Then she was silent for a moment, but Grace said nothing, and Lily continued, "I tell you fairly, Grace, that I shall expect very much from you now."

"Much in what way, Lily?"

"In the way of worship. I shall not be content that you should merely love him. If he has come here, as he must have done, to say that the moment of the world's reproach is the moment he has chosen to ask you to be his wife, I think that you will owe him more than love."

"I shall owe him more than love, and I will pay him more than love," said Grace. There was something in the tone of her voice as she spoke which made Lily stop her and look up into her face. There was a smile there which Lily had never seen before, and which gave a beauty to her which was wonderful to Lily's eyes. Surely this lover of Grace's must have seen her smile like that, and therefore had loved her and was giving such wonderful proof of his love. "Yes," continued Grace, standing and looking at her friend, "you may stare at me, Lily, but you may be sure that I will do for Major Grantly all the good that I can do for him."

"What do you mean, Grace?"

"Never mind what I mean. You are very imperious in managing your own affairs, and you must let me be so equally in mine."

"But I tell you everything."

"Do you suppose that if—if—if in real truth it can possibly be the case that Major Grantly shall have come here to offer me his hand when we are all ground down into the dust as we are, do you think that I will let him sacrifice himself? Would you?"

"Certainly. Why not? There will be no sacrifice. He will be asking for that which he wishes to get; and you will be bound to give it to him."

"If he wants it, where is his nobility? If it be as you say, he will have shown himself noble, and his nobility will have consisted in this, that he has been willing to take that which he does not want, in order that he may succour one whom he loves. I also will succour one whom I love as best I know how." Then she walked on quickly before her friend, and Lily stood for a moment thinking before she followed her. They were now on a field-path, by which they were enabled to escape the road back to Allington for the greater part of the distance, and Grace had reached a stile, and had clambered over it before Lily had caught her.

"You must not go away by yourself," said Lily.

"I don't wish to go away by myself."

"I want you to stop a moment and listen to me. I am sure you are wrong in this,—wrong for both your sakes. You believe that he loves you?"

"I thought he did once; and if he has come here to see me, I suppose he does still."

"If that be the case, and if you also love him——"

"I do. I make no mystery about that to you. I do love him with all my heart. I love him to-day, now that I believe him to be here, and that I suppose I shall see him, perhaps this very afternoon. And I loved him yesterday, when I thought that I should never see him again. I do love him. I do. I love him so well that I will never do him an injury."

"That being so, if he makes you an offer you are bound to accept it. I do not think that you have an alternative."

"I have an alternative, and I shall use it. Why don't you take my cousin John?"

"Because I like somebody else better. If you have got as good a reason I won't say another word to you."

"And why don't you take that other person?"

"Because I cannot trust his love; that is why. It is not very kind of you, opening my sores afresh, when I am trying to heal yours."

"Oh, Lily, am I unkind,—unkind to you, who have been so generous to me?"

"I'll forgive you all that and a deal more if you will only listen to me and try to take my advice. Because this major of yours does a generous thing which is for the good of you both,—the infinite good of both of you,—you are to emulate his generosity by doing a thing which will be for the good of neither of you. That is about it. Yes, it is, Grace. You cannot doubt that he has been meaning this for some time past; and, of course, if he looks upon you as his own,—and I daresay, if the whole truth is to be told, he does——"

"But I am not his own."

"Yes, you are, in one sense; you have just said so with a great deal of energy. And if it be so,—let me see, where was I?"

"Oh, Lily, you need not mind where you were."

"But I do mind, and I hate to be interrupted in my arguments. Yes, just that. If he saw his cow sick, he'd try to doctor the cow in her sickness. He sees that you are sick, and of course he comes to your relief."

"I am not Major Grantly's cow."

"Yes, you are."

"Nor his dog, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his, except —except, Lily, the dearest friend that he has on the face of the earth.

He cannot have a friend that will go further for him than I will. He will never know how far I will go to serve him. You don't know his people. Nor do I know them. But I know what they are. His sister is married to a marquis."

"What has that to do with it?" said Lily sharply. "If she were married to an archduke, what difference would that make?"

"They are proud people,—all of them,—and rich; and they live with high persons in the world."

"I didn't care though they lived with the royal family, and had the Prince of Wales for their bosom friend. It only shows how much better he is than they are."

"But think what my family is,—how we are situated! When my father was simply poor I did not care about it, because he has been born and bred a gentleman. But now he is disgraced. Yes, Lily, he is. I am bound to say so, at any rate to myself, when I am thinking of Major Grantly; and I will not carry that disgrace into a family which would feel it so keenly as they would do." Lily, however, went on with her arguments, and was still arguing when they turned the corner of the lane, and came upon Lily's uncle and the major himself.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHOWING WHAT MAJOR GRANTLY DID AFTER HIS WALK.

In going down from the church to the Small House Lily Dale had all the conversation to herself. During some portion of the way the path was only broad enough for two persons, and here Major Grantly walked by Lily's side, while Grace followed them. Then they found their way into the house, and Lily made her little speech to her mother about catching the major. "Yes, my dear, I have seen Major Grantly before," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose he has met you on the road. But I did

not expect that any of you would have returned so soon." Some little explanation followed as to the squire, and as to Major Grantly's walk, and after that the great thing was to leave the two lovers alone. "You will dine here, of course, Major Grantly," Mrs. Dale said. But this he declined. He had learned, he said, that there was a night-train up to London, and he thought that he would return to town by that. He had intended, when he left London, to get back as soon as possible. Then Mrs. Dale, having hesitated for two or three seconds, got up and left the room, and Lily followed. "It seems very odd and abrupt," said Mrs. Dale to her daughter, "but I suppose it is best." "Of course, it is best, mamma. Do as one would be done by;—that's the only rule. It will be much better for her that she should have it over."

Grace was seated on a sofa, and Major Grantly got up from his chair, and came and stood opposite to her. "Grace," he said, "I hope you are not angry with me for coming down to see you here."

"No, I am not angry," she said.

"I have thought a great deal about it, and your friend, Miss Prettyman, knew that I was coming. She quite approves of my coming."

"She has written to me, but did not tell me of it," said Grace, not knowing what other answer to make.

"No,—she could not have done that. She had no authority. I only mention her name because it will have weight with you, and because I have not done that which, under other circumstances, perhaps, I should have been bound to do. I have not seen your father."

"Poor papa," said Grace.

"I have felt that at the present moment I could not do so with any success. It has not come of any want of respect either for him or for you. Of course, Grace, you know why I am here?" He paused, and, then remembering that he had no right to expect an answer to such a question, he continued, "I have come here, dearest Grace, to ask you to be my wife, and to be a mother to Edith. I know that you love Edith."

"I do indeed."

"And I have hoped sometimes,—though I suppose I ought not to say so,—but I have hoped and almost thought sometimes, that you have been willing to—to love me, too. It is better to tell the truth simply, is it not?"

"I suppose so," said Grace.

"And therefore, and because I love you dearly myself, I have come to ask you to be my wife." Saying which he opened out his hand, and held it to her. But she did not take it. "There is my hand, Grace. If your heart is as I would have it you can give me yours, and I shall want nothing else to make me happy." But still she made no motion towards granting him his request. "If I have been too sudden," he said, "you must forgive me for that. I have been sudden and abrupt, but as things are, no other way has been open to me. Can you not bring yourself to give me some answer, Grace?" His hand had now fallen again to his side, but he was still standing before her.

She had said no word to him as yet, except that one in which she had acknowledged her love for his child, and had expressed no surprise, even in her countenance, at his proposal. And yet the idea that he should do such a thing, since the idea that he certainly would do it had become clear to her, had filled her with a world of surprise. No girl ever lived with any beauty belonging to her who had a smaller knowledge of her own possession than Grace Crawley. Nor had she the slightest pride in her own acquirements. That she had been taught in many things more than had been taught to other girls, had come of her poverty and of the desolation of her home. She had learned to read Greek and Italian because there had been nothing else for her to do in that sad house. And, subsequently, accuracy of knowledge had been necessary for the earning of her bread. I think that Grace had at times been weak enough to envy the idleness and almost to envy the ignorance of other girls. Her figure was light, perfect in symmetry, full of grace at all points; but she had thought nothing of her figure, remembering only the poverty of her dress, but remembering also with a brave resolution that she would never be ashamed of it. And as her acquaintance with Major Grantly had begun and had grown, and as she had learned to feel unconsciously that his company was pleasanter to her than that of any other person she knew, she had still told herself that anything like love must be out of the question. But then words had been spoken, and there had been glances in his eye, and a tone in his voice, and a touch upon his fingers, of which she could not altogether refuse to accept the meaning. And others had spoken to her of it, the two Miss Prettymans and her friend Lily. Yet she would not admit to herself that it could be so, and she would not allow herself to confess to herself

that she loved him. Then had come the last killing misery to which her father had been subjected. He had been accused of stealing money, and had been committed to be tried for the theft. From that moment, at any rate, any hope, if there had been a hope, must be crushed. But she swore to herself bravely that there had been no such hope. And she assured herself also that nothing had passed which had entitled her to expect anything beyond ordinary friendship from the man of whom she certainly had thought much. Even if those touches and those tones and those glances had meant anything, all such meaning must be annihilated by this disgrace which had come upon her. She might know that her father was innocent; she might be sure, at any rate, that he had been innocent in intention; but the world thought differently, and she, her brothers and sister, and her mother and her poor father, must bend to the world's opinion. If those dangerous joys had meant anything, they must be taken as meaning nothing more.

Thus she had argued with herself, and fortified by such self-teachings, she had come down to Allington. Since she had been with her friends there had come upon her from day to day a clear conviction that her arguments had been undoubtedly true,—a clear conviction which had been very cold to her heart in spite of all her courage. She had expected nothing, hoped for nothing, and yet when nothing came she was sad. She thought of one special half-hour in which he had said almost all that he might have said,—more than he ought to have said; —of a moment during which her hand had remained in his; of a certain pressure with which he had put her shawl upon her shoulders. If he had only written to her one word to tell her that he believed her father was innocent! But no; she had no right to expect anything from him. And then Lily had ceased to talk of him, and she did expect nothing. Now he was there before her, asking her to come to him and be his wife. Yes; she would kiss his shoebuckles, only that the kissing of his shoebuckles would bring upon him that injury which he should never suffer from her hands! He had been generous, and her self-pride was satisfied. But her other pride was touched, and she also would be generous. "Can you not bring yourself to give me some answer?" he had said to her. Of course she must give him an answer, but how should she give it?

"You are very kind," she said.

"I would be more than kind."

"So you are. Kind is a cold word when used to such a friend at such a time."

"I would be everything on earth to you that a man can be to a woman."

"I know I ought to thank you if I knew how. My heart is full of thanks. It is, indeed."

"And is there no room for love there?"

"There is no room for love in our house, Major Grantly. You have not seen papa?"

"No; but, if you wish it, I will do so at once."

"It would do no good,—none. I only asked you because you can hardly know how sad is our state at home."

"But I cannot see that that need deter you, if you can love me."

"Can you not? If you saw him, and the house, and my mother, you would not say so. In the Bible it is said of some season that it is not a time for marrying, or for giving in marriage. And so it is with us."

"I am not pressing you as to a day. I only ask you to say that you will be engaged to me,—so that I may tell my own people, and let it be known."

"I understand all that. I know how good you are. But, Major Grantly, you must understand me also when I assure you that it cannot be so."

"Do you mean that you refuse me altogether?"

"Yes; altogether."

"And why?"

"Must I answer that question? Ought I to be made to answer it? But I will tell you fairly, without touching on anything else, that I feel that we are all disgraced, and that I will not take disgrace into another family."

"Grace, do you love me?"

"I love no one now,—that is, as you mean. I can love no one. I have no room for any feeling except for my father and mother, and for us all. I should not be here now but that I save my mother the bread that I should eat at home."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"Yes, it is as bad as that. It is much worse than that, if you knew

it all. You cannot conceive how low we have fallen. And now they tell me that my father will be found guilty, and will be sent to prison. Putting ourselves out of the question, what would you think of a girl who could engage herself to any man under such circumstances? What would you think of a girl who would allow herself to be in love in such a position? Had I been ten times engaged to you I would have broken it off." Then she got up to leave him.

But he stopped her, holding her by the arm. "What you have said will make me say what I certainly should never have said without it. I declare that we are engaged."

"No, we are not," said Grace.

"You have told me that you loved me."

"I never told you so."

"There are other ways of speaking than the voice; and I will boast to you, though to no one else, that you have told me so. I believe you love me. I shall hold myself as engaged to you, and I shall think you false if I hear that you listen to another man. Now, good-bye, Grace;—my own Grace."

"No, I am not your own," she said, through her tears.

"You are my own, my very own. God bless you, dear, dear, dearest Grace. You shall hear from me in a day or two, and shall see me as soon as this horrid trial is over." Then he took her in his arms before she could escape from him, and kissed her forehead and her lips, while she struggled in his arms. After that he left the room and the house as quickly as he could, and was seen no more of the Dales upon that occasion.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SHOWING HOW MAJOR GRANTLY RETURNED TO GUESTWICK.

GRACE, when she was left alone, threw herself upon the sofa, and hid her face in her hands. She was weeping almost hysterically, and had been utterly dismayed and frightened by her lover's impetuosity. Things had gone after a fashion which her imagination had not painted to her as possible. Surely she had the power to refuse the man if she pleased. And yet she felt as she lay there weeping that she did in truth belong to him as part of his goods, and that her generosity had been foiled. She had especially resolved that she would not confess to any love for him. She had made no such confession. She had guarded herself against doing so with all the care which she knew how to use. But he had assumed the fact, and she had been unable to deny it. Could she have lied to him, and have sworn that she did not love him? Could she have so perjured herself, even in support of her generosity? Yes, she would have done so,—so she told herself,—if a moment had been given to her for thought. She ought to have done so, and she blamed herself for being so little prepared for the occasion. The lie would be useless now. Indeed, she would have no opportunity for telling it; for of course she would not answer,—would not even read his letter. Though he might know that she loved him, yet she would not be his wife. He had forced her secret from her, but he could not force her to marry him. She did love him, but he should never be disgraced by her love.

After a while she was able to think of his conduct, and she believed that she ought to be very angry with him. He had taken her roughly in his arms, and had insulted her. He had forced a kiss from her. She had felt his arms warm and close and strong about her, and had not known whether she were in paradise or in purgatory. She was very

angry with him. She would send back his letter to him without reading it,—without opening it, if that might be possible. He had done that to her which nothing could justify. But yet,—yet,—yet how dearly she loved him! Was he not a prince of men? He had behaved badly of course; but had any man ever behaved so badly before in so divine a way? Was it not a thousand pities that she should be driven to deny anything to a lover who so richly deserved everything that could be given to him? He had kissed her hand as he let her go, and now, not knowing what she did, she kissed the spot on which she had felt his lips. His arm had been round her waist, and the old frock which she wore should be kept by her for ever because it had been so graced.

What was she now to say to Lily and to Lily's mother? Of one thing there was no doubt. She would never tell them of her lover's wicked audacity. That was a secret never to be imparted to any ears. She would keep her resentment to herself, and not ask the protection of any vicarious wrath. He could never so sin again, that was certain; and she would keep all knowledge and memory of the sin for her own purposes. But how could it be that such a man as that, one so good though so sinful, so glorious though so great a trespasser, should have come to such a girl as her and have asked for her love? Then she thought of her father's poverty and the misery of her own condition, and declared to herself that it was very wonderful.

Lily was the first to enter the room, and she, before she did so, learned from the servant that Major Grantly had left the house. "I heard the door, miss, and then I saw the top of his hat out of the pantry window." Armed with this certain information Lily entered the drawing-room, and found Grace in the act of rising from the sofa.

"Am I disturbing you?" said Lily.

"No; not at all. I am glad you have come. Kiss me, and be good to me." And she twined her arms about Lily and embraced her.

"Am I not always good to you, you simpleton? Has he been good?"

"I don't know what you mean?"

"And have you been good to him?"

"As good as I knew how, Lily."

"And where is he?"

"He has gone away. I shall never see him any more, Lily." Then

she hid her face upon her friend's shoulder and broke forth again into hysterical tears.

"But tell me, Grace, what he said;—that is, if you mean to tell me!"

"I will tell you everything;—that is, everything I can." And Grace blushed as she thought of the one secret which she certainly would not tell.

"Has he,—has he done what I said he would do? Come, speak out boldly. Has he asked you to be his wife?"

"Yes," said Grace, barely whispering the word.

"And you have accepted him?"

"No, Lily, I have not. Indeed, I have not. I did not know how to speak, because I was surprised;—and he, of course, could say what he liked. But I told him as well as I could, that I would not marry him."

"And why;—did you tell him why?"

"Yes; because of papa!"

"Then, if he is the man I take him to be, that answer will go for nothing. Of course he knew all that before he came here. He did not think you were an heiress with forty thousand pounds. If he is in earnest, that will go for nothing. And I think he is in earnest."

"And so was I in earnest."

"Well, Grace;—we shall see."

"I suppose I may have a will of my own, Lily."

"Do not be so sure of that. Women are not allowed to have wills of their own on all occasions. Some man comes in a girl's way, and she gets to be fond of him, just because he does come in her way. Well; when that has taken place, she has no alternative but to be taken if he chooses to take her; or to be left, if he chooses to leave her."

"Lily, don't say that."

"But I do say it. A man may assure himself that he will find for himself a wife who shall be learned, or beautiful, or six feet high, if he wishes it, or who has red hair, or red eyes, or red cheeks,—just what he pleases; and he may go about till he finds it, as you can go about and match your worsteds. You are a fool if you buy a colour you don't want. But we can never match our worsteds for that other piece of work, but are obliged to take any colour that comes,—and

therefore it is that we make such a jumble of it! Here's mamma. We must not be philosophical before her. Mamma, Major Grantly has—skedaddled."

"Oh, Lily, what a word!"

'But, oh, mamma, what a thing! Fancy his going away and not saying a word to anybody!"

"If he had anything to say to Grace, I suppose he said it."

"He asked her to marry him, of course. We none of us had any doubt about that. He swore to her that she and none but she should be his wife,—and all that kind of thing. But he seems to have done it in the most prosaic way;—and now he has gone away without saying a word to any of us. I shall never speak to him again,—unless Grace asks me."

"Grace, my dear, may I congratulate you?" said Mrs. Dale.

Grace did not answer, as Lily was too quick for her. "Oh, she has refused him, of course. But Major Grantly is a man of too much sense to expect that he should succeed the first time. Let me see; this is the fourteenth. These clocks run fourteen days, and, therefore, you may expect him again about the twenty-eighth. For myself, I think you are giving him an immense deal of unnecessary trouble, and that if he left you in the lurch it would only serve you right; but you have the world with you, I'm told. A girl is supposed to tell a man two fibs before she may tell him one truth."

"I told him no fib, Lily. I told him that I would not marry him, and I will not."

"But why not, dear Grace?" said Mrs. Dale.

"Because the people say that papa is a thief!" Having said this, Grace walked slowly out of the room, and neither Mrs. Dale nor Lily attempted to follow her.

"She's as good as gold," said Lily, when the door was closed.

"And he;—what of him?"

"I think he is good, too; but she has told me nothing yet of what he has said to her. He must be good, or he would not have come down here after her. But I don't wonder at his coming, because she is so beautiful! Once or twice as we were walking back to-day, I thought her face was the most lovely that I had ever seen. And did you see her just now, as she spoke of her father?"

"Oh, yes;—I saw her."

"Think what she will be in two or three years' time, when she becomes a woman. She talks French, and Italian, and Hebrew for anything that I know; and she is perfectly beautiful. I never saw a more lovely figure;—and she has spirit enough for a goddess. I don't think that Major Grantly is such a fool after all."

"I never took him for a fool."

"I have no doubt all his own people do;—or they will, when they hear of it. But, mamma, she will grow to be big enough to walk atop of all the Lady Hartletops in England. It will all come right at last."

"You think it will?"

"Oh, yes. Why should it not? If he is worth having, it will;—and I think he is worth having. He must wait till this horrid trial is over. It is clear to me that Grace thinks that her father will be convicted."

"But he cannot have taken the money."

"I think he took it, and I think it wasn't his. But I don't think he stole it. I don't know whether you can understand the difference."

"I am afraid a jury won't understand it."

"A jury of men will not. I wish they could put you and me on it, mamma. I would take my best boots and eat them down to the heels, for Grace's sake,—and for Major Grantly's. What a good-looking man he is!"

"Yes, he is."

"And so like a gentleman! I'll tell you what, mamma; we won't say anything to her about him for the present. Her heart will be so full she will be driven to talk, and we can comfort her better in that way." The mother and daughter agreed to act upon these tactics, and nothing more was said to Grace about her lover on that evening.

Major Grantly walked from Mrs. Dale's house to the inn and ordered his gig, and drove himself out of Allington, almost without remembering where he was or whither he was going. He was thinking solely of what had just occurred, and of what, on his part, should follow, as the result of that meeting. Half at least of the noble deeds done in this world are due to emulation, rather than to the native nobility of the actors. A young man leads a forlorn hope because another young man has offered to do so. Jones in the hunting-field rides at an impracticable fence because he is told that Smith took it three years ago. And

Walker puts his name down for ten guineas at a charitable dinner when he hears Thompson's read out for five. And in this case the generosity and self-denial shown by Grace warmed and cherished similar virtues within her lover's breast. Some few weeks ago Major Grantly had been in doubt as to what his duty required of him in reference to Grace Crawley; but he had no doubt whatsoever now. In the fervour of his admiration he would have gone straight to the archdeacon, had it been possible, and have told him what he had done and what he intended to do. Nothing now should stop him;—no consideration, that is, either as regarded money or position. He had pledged himself solemnly, and he was very glad that he had pledged himself. He would write to Grace and explain to her that he trusted altogether in her father's honour and innocence, but that no consideration as to that ought to influence either him or her in any way. If, independently of her father, she could bring herself to come to him and be his wife, she was bound to do so now, let the position of her father be what it might. And thus, as he drove his gig back towards Guestwick, he composed a very pretty letter to the lady of his love.

And as he went, at the corner of the lane which led from the main road up to Guestwick cottage, he again came upon John Eames, who was also returning to Guestwick. There had been a few words spoken between Lady Julia and Johnny respecting Major Grantly after the girls had left the cottage, and Johnny had been persuaded that the strange visitor to Allington could have no connection with his arch-enemy. "And why has he come to Allington?" John demanded, somewhat sternly, of his hostess.

"Well; if you ask me, I think he has gone there to see your cousin, Grace Crawley."

"He told me that he knew Grace," said John, looking as though he were conscious of his own ingenuity in putting two and two together very cleverly.

"Your cousin Grace is a very pretty girl," said Lady Julia.

"It's a long time since I've seen her," said Johnny.

"Why, you saw her just this minute," said Lady Julia.

"I didn't look at her," said Johnny. Therefore, when he again met Major Grantly, having continued to put two and two together with great ingenuity, he felt quite sure that the man had nothing to do with

the arch-enemy, and he determined to be gracious. "Did you find them at home at Allington?" he said, raising his hat.

"How do you do again?" said the Major. "Yes, I found your friend Mrs. Dale at home."

"But not her daughter, or my cousin? They were up there;—where I've come from. But, perhaps, they had got back before you left."

"I saw them both. They found me on the road with Mr. Dale."

"What,—the squire? Then you have seen everybody?"

"Everybody I wished to see at Allington."

"But you wouldn't stay at the 'Red Lion'?"

"Well, no. I remembered that I wanted to get back to London; and as I had seen my friends, I thought I might as well hurry away."

"You knew Mrs. Dale before, then?"

"No, I didn't. I never saw her in my life before. But I knew the old squire when I was a boy. However, I should have said a friend. I went to see one friend, and I saw her."

John Eames perceived that his companion put a strong emphasis on the word "her," as though he were determined to declare boldly that he had gone to Allington solely to see Grace Crawley. He had not the slightest objection to recognizing in Major Grantly a suitor for his cousin's hand. He could only reflect what an unusually fortunate girl Grace must be if such a thing could be true. Of those poor Crawleys he had only heard from time to time that their misfortunes were as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, and as unsusceptible of any fixed and permanent arrangement. But, as regarded Grace, here would be a very permanent arrangement. Tidings had reached him that Grace was a great scholar, but he had never heard much of her beauty. It must probably be the case that Major Grantly was fond of Greek. There was, he reminded himself, no accounting for tastes; but as nothing could be more respectable than such an alliance, he thought that it would become him to be civil to the major.

"I hope you found her quite well. I had barely time to speak to her myself."

"Yes, she was very well. This is a sad thing about her father."

'Very sad," said Johnny. Perhaps the major had heard about the accusation for the first time to-day, and was going to find an escape on that plea. If such was the case, it would not be so well to be particularly civil.

"I believe Mr. Crawley is a cousin of yours?" said the major.

"His wife is my mother's first-cousin. Their mothers were sisters."

"She is an excellent woman."

"I believe so. I don't know much about them myself,—that is, personally. Of course I have heard of this charge that has been made against him. It seems to me to be a great shame."

"Well, I can't exactly say that it is a shame. I do not know that there has been anything done with a feeling of persecution or of cruelty. It is a great mystery, and we must have it cleared up if we can."

"I don't suppose he can have been guilty," said Johnny.

"Certainly not in the ordinary sense of the word. I heard all the evidence against him."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes," said the major. "I live near them in Barsetshire, and I am one of his bailsmen."

"Then you are an old friend, I suppose?"

"Not exactly that; but circumstances make me very much interested about them. I fancy that the cheque was left in his house by accident, and that it got into his hands he didn't know how, and that when he used it he thought it was his."

"That's queer," said Johnny.

"He is very odd, you know."

"But it's a kind of oddity that they don't like at the assizes."

"The great cruelty is," said the major, "that whatever may be the result, the punishment will fall so heavily upon his wife and daughters. I think the whole county ought to come forward and take them by the hand. Well, good-bye. I'll drive on, as I'm a little in a hurry."

"Good-bye," said Johnny. "I'm very glad to have had the pleasure of meeting you." "He's a good sort of a fellow after all," he said to himself when the gig had passed on. "He wouldn't have talked in that way if he had meant to hang back."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. TOOGOOD.

MR. CRAWLEY had declared to Mr. Robarts that he would summon no legal aid to his assistance at the coming trial. The reader may, perhaps, remember the impetuosity with which he rejected the advice on this subject which was conveyed to him by Mr. Robarts with all the authority of Archdeacon Grantly's name. "Tell the archdeacon," he had said, "that I will have none of his advice." And then Mr. Robarts had left him, fully convinced that any further interference on his part could be of no avail. Nevertheless, the words which had then been spoken were not without effect. This coming trial was ever present to Mr. Crawley's mind, and though, when driven to discuss the subject, he would speak of it with high spirit, as he had done both to the bishop and to Mr. Robarts, yet in his long hours of privacy, or when alone with his wife, his spirit was anything but high. "It will kill me," he would say to her. "I shall get salvation thus. Death will relieve me, and I shall never be called upon to stand before those cruel eager eyes." Then would she try to say words of comfort, sometimes soothing him as though he were a child, and at others bidding him be a man, and remember that as a man he should have sufficient endurance to bear the eyes of any crowd that might be there to look at him.

"I think I will go up to London," he said to her one evening, very soon after the day of Mr. Robarts's visit.

"Go up to London, Josiah!" Mr. Crawley had not been up to London once since they had been settled at Hogglestock, and this sudden resolution on his part frightened his wife. "Go up to London, dearest! and why?"

"I will tell you why. They all say that I should speak to some man of the law whom I may trust about this coming trial. I trust no one in these parts. Not, mark you, that I say that they are untrust-

worthy. God forbid that I should so speak or even so think of men whom I know not. But the matter has become so common in men's mouths at Barchester and at Silverbridge, that I cannot endure to go among them and to talk of it. I will go up to London, and I will see your cousin, Mr. John Toogood, of Gray's Inn." Now in this scheme there was an amount of everyday prudence which startled Mrs. Crawley almost as much as did the prospect of the difficulties to be overcome if the journey were to be made. Her husband, in the first place, had never once seen Mr. John Toogood; and in days very long back, when he and she were making their first gallant struggle,—for in those days it had been gallant,—down in their Cornish curacy,—he had reprobated certain Toogood civilities,—professional civilities,—which had been proffered, perhaps, with too plain an intimation that on the score of relationship the professional work should be done without payment. The Mr. Toogood of those days, who had been Mrs. Crawley's uncle, and the father of Mrs. Eames, and grandfather of our friend Johnny Eames, had been much angered by some correspondence which had grown up between him and Mr. Crawley, and from that day there had been a cessation of all intercourse between the families. Since those days that Toogood had been gathered to the ancient Toogoods of old, and the son reigned on the family throne in Raymond's Buildings. The present Toogood was therefore first-cousin to Mrs. Crawley. But there had been no intimacy between them. Mrs. Crawley had not seen her cousin since her marriage,—as indeed she had seen none of her relations, having been estranged from them by the singular bearing of her husband. She knew that her cousin stood high in his profession, the firm of Toogood and Crump,—Crump and Toogood it should have been properly called in these days,—having always held its head up high above all dirty work; and she felt that her husband could look for advice from no better source. But how would such a one as he manage to tell his story to a stranger? Nay, how would he find his way alone into the lawyer's room, to tell his story at all,—so strange was he to the world? And then the expense!

"If you do not wish me to apply to your cousin, say so, and there shall be an end of it," said Mr. Crawley, in an angry tone.

"Of course I would wish it. I believe him to be an excellent man, and a good lawyer."

"Then why should I not go to his chambers? *In formâ pauperis* I

must go to him, and must tell him so. I cannot pay him for the labour of his counsel, nor for such minutes of his time as I shall use."

"Oh, Josiah, you need not speak of that."

"But I must speak of it. Can I go to a professional man, who keeps as it were his shop open for those who may think fit to come, and purchase of him, and take of his goods, and afterwards, when the goods have been used, tell him that I have not the price in my hand? I will not do that, Mary. You think that I am mad; that I know not what I do. Yes,—I see it in your eyes; and you are sometimes partly right. But I am not so mad but that I know what is honest. I will tell your cousin that I am sore straitened, and brought down into the very dust by misfortune. And I will beseech him, for what of ancient feeling of family he may bear to you, to listen to me for a while. And I will be very short, and, if need be, will bide his time patiently, and perhaps he may say a word to me that may be of use."

There was certainly very much in this to provoke Mrs. Crawley. It was not only that she knew well that her cousin would give ample and immediate attention, and lend himself thoroughly to the matter without any idea of payment,—but that she could not quite believe that her husband's humility was true humility. She strove to believe it, but knew that she failed. After all it was only a feeling on her part. There was no argument within herself about it. An unpleasant taste came across the palate of her mind, as such a savour will sometimes, from some unexpected source, come across the palate of the mouth. Well; she could only gulp at it, and swallow it and excuse it. Among the salad that comes from your garden a bitter leaf will now and then make its way into your salad bowl. Alas, there were so many bitter leaves ever making their way into her bowl! "What I mean is, Josiah, that no long explanation will be needed. I think, from what I remember of him, that he would do for us anything that he could do."

"Then I will go to the man, and will humble myself before him. Even that, hard as it is to me, may be a duty that I owe." Mr. Crawley as he said this was remembering the fact that he was a clergyman of the Church of England, and that he had a rank of his own in the country, which, did he ever do such a thing as go out to dinner in company, would establish for him a certain right of precedence;

whereas this attorney, of whom he was speaking, was, so to say, nobody in the eyes of the world.

"There need be no humbling, Josiah, other than that which is due from man to man in all circumstances. But never mind; we will not talk about that. If it seems good to you, go to Mr. Toogood. I think that it is good. May I write to him and say that you will go?"

"I will write myself; it will be more seemly."

Then the wife paused before she asked the next question,—paused for some minute or two, and then asked it with anxious doubt,—"And may I go with you, Josiah?"

"Why should two go when one can do the work?" he answered sharply. "Have we money so much at command?"

"Indeed, no."

"You should go and do it all, for you are wiser in these things than I am, were it not that I may not dare to show—that I submit myself to my wife."

"Nay, my dear!"

"But it is ay, my dear. It is so. This is a thing such as men do; not such as women do, unless they be forlorn and unaided of men. I know that I am weak where you are strong; that I am crazed where you are clear-witted."

"I meant not that, Josiah. It was of your health that I thought."

"Nevertheless it is as I say. But, for all that, it may not be that you should do my work. There are those watching me who would say, 'Lo! he confesses himself incapable.' And then some one would whisper something of a madhouse. Mary, after all I fear that worse than a prison."

"May God in His mercy forbid such cruelty!"

"But I must look to it, my dear. Do you think that that woman, who sits there at Barchester in high places, disgracing herself and that puny ecclesiastical lord who is her husband,—do you think that she would not immure me if she could? She is a she-wolf,—only less reasonable than the dumb brute as she sharpens her teeth in malice coming from anger, and not in malice coming from hunger as do the outer wolves of the forest. I tell you, Mary, that if she had a colourable ground for her action, she would swear to-morrow that I am mad."

"You shall go alone to London."

"Yes, I will go alone. They shall not say that I cannot yet do my

own work as a man should do it. I stood up before him, the puny man who is called a bishop, and before her who makes herself great by his littleness, and I scorned them both to their faces. Though the shoes which I had on were all broken, as I myself could not but see when I stood, yet I was greater than they were with all their purple and fine linen."

"But, Josiah, my cousin will not be harsh to you."

"Well,—and if he be not?"

"Ill-usage you can bear; and violent ill-usage, such as that which Mrs. Proudie allowed herself to exhibit, you can repay with interest; but kindness seems to be too heavy a burden for you."

"I will struggle. I will endeavour. I will speak but little, and, if possible, I will listen much. Now, my dear, I will write to this man, and you shall give me the address that is proper for him." Then he wrote the letter, not accepting a word in the way of dictation from his wife, but "craving the great kindness of a short interview, for which he ventured to become a solicitor, urged thereto by his wife's assurance that one with whom he was connected by family ties would do as much as this for the possible preservation of the honour of the family." In answer to this, Mr. Toogood wrote back as follows:—"Dear Mr. Crawley, I will be at my office all Thursday morning next from ten to two, and will take care that you shan't be kept waiting for me above ten minutes. You parsons never like waiting. But hadn't you better come and breakfast with me and Maria at nine? Then we'd have a talk as we walk to the office. Yours always, THOMAS TOOGOOD." And the letter was dated from the attorney's private house in Tavistock Square.

"I am sure he means to be kind," said Mrs Crawley.

"Doubtless he means to be kind. But his kindness is rough;—I will not say unmannerly, as the word would be harsh. I have never even seen the lady whom he calls Maria."

"She is his wife!"

"So I would venture to suppose; but she is unknown to me. I will write again, and thank him, and say that I will be with him at ten to the moment."

There were still many things to be settled before the journey could be made. Mr. Crawley, in his first plan, proposed that he should go up by night mail train, travelling in the third class, having walked

over to Silverbridge to meet it; that he should then walk about London from 5 A.M. to 10 A.M., and afterwards come down by an afternoon train to which a third class was also attached. But at last his wife persuaded him that such a task as that, performed in the middle of the winter, would be enough to kill any man, and that, if attempted, it would certainly kill him; and he consented at last to sleep the night in town, —being specially moved thereto by discovering that he could, in conformity with this scheme, get in and out of the train at a station considerably nearer to him than Silverbridge, and that he could get a ticket at a third class fare. The whole journey, he found, could be done for a pound, allowing him seven shillings for his night's expenses in London; and out of the resources of the family there were produced two sovereigns, so that in the event of accident he would not utterly be a castaway from want of funds.

So he started on his journey after an early dinner, almost hopeful through the new excitement of a journey to London, and his wife walked with him nearly as far as the station. "Do not reject my cousin's kindness," were the last words she spoke.

"For his professional kindness, if he will extend it to me, I will be most thankful," he replied. She did not dare to say more; nor had she dared to write privately to her cousin, asking for any special help, lest by doing so she should seem to impugn the sufficiency and stability of her husband's judgment. He got up to town late at night, and having made inquiry of one of the porters, he hired a bed for himself in the neighbourhood of the railway station. Here he had a cup of tea and a morsel of bread-and-butter, and in the morning he breakfasted again on the same fare. "No, I have no luggage," he had said to the girl at the public-house, who had asked him as to his travelling gear. "If luggage be needed as a certificate of respectability, I will pass on elsewhere," said he. The girl stared, and assured him that she did not doubt his respectability. "I am a clergyman of the Church of England," he had said, "but my circumstances prevent me from seeking a more expensive lodging." They did their best to make him comfortable, and, I think, almost disappointed him in not heaping further misfortunes on his head.

He was in Raymond's Buildings at half-past nine, and for half an hour walked up and down the umbrageous pavement,—it used to be

umbrageous, but perhaps the trees have gone now,—before the doors of the various chambers. He could hear the clock strike from Gray's Inn; and the moment that it had struck he was turning in, but was encountered in the passage by Mr. Toogood, who was equally punctual with himself. Strange stories about Mr. Crawley had reached Mr. Toogood's household, and that Maria, the mention of whose Christian name had been so offensive to the clergyman, had begged her husband not to be a moment late. Poor Mr. Toogood, who on ordinary days did perhaps take a few minutes' grace, was thus hurried away almost with his breakfast in his throat, and, as we have seen, just saved himself. "Perhaps, sir, you are Mr. Crawley?" he said, in a good-humoured, cheery voice. He was a good-humoured, cheery-looking man, about fifty years of age, with grizzled hair and sunburnt face, and large whiskers. Nobody would have taken him to be a partner in any of those great houses of which we have read in history,—the Quirk, Gammon and Snaps of the profession, or the Dodson and Foggs, who are immortal.

"That is my name, sir," said Mr. Crawley, taking off his hat and bowing low, "and I am here by appointment to meet Mr. Toogood, the solicitor, whose name I see affixed upon the door-post."

"I am Mr. Toogood, the solicitor, and I hope I see you quite well, Mr. Crawley." Then the attorney shook hands with the clergyman and preceded him upstairs to the front room on the first floor. "Here we are, Mr. Crawley, and pray take a chair. I wish you could have made it convenient to come and see us at home. We are rather long, as my wife says,—long in family, she means, and therefore are not very well off for spare beds——"

"Oh, sir."

"I've twelve of 'em living, Mr. Crawley,—from eighteen years, the eldest,—a girl, down to eighteen months, the youngest,—a boy, and they go in and out, boy and girl, boy and girl, like the cogs of a wheel. They ain't such far away distant cousins from your own young ones—only first, once, as we call it."

"I am aware that there is a family tie, or I should not have ventured to trouble you."

"Blood is thicker than water; isn't it? I often say that. I heard of one of your girls only yesterday. She is staying somewhere down

in the country, not far from where my sister lives,—Mrs. Eames, the widow of poor John Eames who never did any good in this world. I daresay you've heard of her?"

"The name is familiar to me, Mr. Toogood."

"Of course it is. I've a nephew down there just now, and he saw your girl the other day; very highly he spoke of her too. Let me see;—how many is it you have?"

"Three living, Mr. Toogood."

"I've just four times three;—that's the difference. But I comfort myself with the text about the quiver you know; and I tell them that when they've eat up all the butter, they'll have to take their bread dry."

"I trust the young people take your teaching in a proper spirit."

"I dont know much about spirit. There's spirit enough. My second girl, Lucy, told me that if I came home to-day without tickets for the pantomime I shouldn't have any dinner allowed me. That's the way they treat me. But we understand each other at home. We are all pretty good friends there, thank God. And there isn't a sick chick among the boiling."

"You have many mercies for which you should indeed be thankful," said Mr. Crawley, gravely.

"Yes, yes, yes; that's true. I think of that sometimes, though perhaps not so much as I ought to do. But the best way to be thankful is to use the goods the gods provide you. 'The lovely Thais sits beside you. Take the goods the gods provide you.' I often say that to my wife, till the children have got to calling her Thais. The children have it pretty much their own way with us, Mr. Crawley."

By this time Mr. Crawley was almost beside himself, and was altogether at a loss how to bring in the matter on which he wished to speak. He had expected to find a man who in the hurry of London business might perhaps just manage to spare him five minutes,—who would grapple instantly with the subject that was to be discussed between them, would speak to him half-a-dozen hard words of wisdom, and would then dismiss him and turn on the instant to other matters of important business;—but here was an easy familiar fellow, who seemed to have nothing on earth to do and at this first meeting had taken advantage of a distant family connection to tell him everything about the affairs of his own household. And then how peculiar were the

domestic traits which he told! What was Mr. Crawley to say to a man who had taught his own children to call their mother Thais? Of Thais Mr. Crawley did know something, and he forgot to remember that perhaps Mr. Toogood knew less. He felt it, however, to be very difficult to submit the details of his case to a gentleman who talked in such a strain about his own wife and children.

But something must be done. Mr. Crawley, in his present frame of mind, could not sit and talk about Thais all day. "Sir," he said, "the picture of your home is very pleasant, and I presume that plenty abounds there."

"Well, you know, pretty toll-loll for that. With twelve of 'em, Mr. Crawley, I needn't tell you they are not all going to have castles and parks of their own, unless they can get 'em off their own bats. But I pay upwards of a hundred a year each for my eldest three boys' schooling, and I've been paying eighty for the girls. Put that and that together and see what it comes to. Educate, educate, educate; that's my word."

"No better word can be spoken, sir."

"I don't think there's a girl in Tavistock Square that can beat Polly,—she's the eldest, called after her mother, you know;—that can beat her at the piano. And Lucy has read Lord Byron and Tom Moore all through, every word of 'em. By Jove I believe she knows most of Tom Moore by heart. And the young 'uns are coming on just as well."

"Perhaps, sir, as your time is, no doubt, precious——"

"Just at this time of the day we don't care so much about it, Mr. Crawley; and one doesn't catch a new cousin every day, you know."

"However, if you will allow me——"

"We'll tackle to? Very well; so be it. Now, Mr. Crawley, let me hear what it is that I can do for you." Of a sudden, as Mr. Toogood spoke these last words, the whole tone of his voice seemed to change, and even the position of his body became so much altered as to indicate a different kind of man. "You just tell your story in your own way, and I won't interrupt you till you've done. That's always the best."

"I must first crave your attention to an unfortunate preliminary,' said Mr. Crawley.

"And what is that?"

"I come before you *in formâ pauperis*." Here Mr. Crawley paused

and stood up before the attorney with his hands crossed one upon the other, bending low, as though calling attention to the poorness of his raiment. "I know that I have no justification for my conduct. I have nothing of reason to offer why I should trespass upon your time. I am a poor man, and cannot pay you for your services."

"Oh, bother!" said Mr. Toogood, jumping up out of his chair.

"I do not know whether your charity will grant me that which I ask——"

"Don't let's have any more of this," said the attorney. "We none of us like this kind of thing at all. If I can be of any service to you, you're as welcome to it as flowers in May; and as for billing my first-cousin, which your wife is, I should as soon think of sending in an account to my own."

"But, Mr. Toogood——"

"Do you go on now with your story; I'll put the rest all right."

"I was bound to be explicit, Mr. Toogood."

"Very well; now you have been explicit with a vengeance, and you may heave a-head. Let's hear the story, and if I can help you I will. When I've said that, you may be sure I mean it. I've heard something of it before, but let me hear it all from you."

Then Mr. Crawley began and told the story. Mr. Toogood was actually true to his promise, and let the narrator go on with his narrative without interruption. When Mr. Crawley came to his own statement that the cheque had been paid to him by Mr. Soames, and went on to say that that statement had been false,—"I told him that, but I told him so wrongly,"—and then paused, thinking that the lawyer would ask some question, Mr. Toogood simply said, "Go on; go on. I'll come back to all that when you've done." And he merely nodded his head when Mr. Crawley spoke of his second statement, that the money had come from the dean. "We had been bound together by close ties of early familiarity," said Mr. Crawley, "and in former years our estates in life were the same. But he has prospered and I have failed. And when creditors were importunate, I consented to accept relief in money, which had previously been often offered. And I must acknowledge, Mr. Toogood, while saying this, that I have known,—have known with heartfelt agony,—that at former times my wife has taken that from my friend Mr. Arabin with hand half-hidden from me, which I have refused. Whether it be better to eat—the

bread of charity,—or not to eat bread at all, I, for myself, have no doubt," he said; "but when the want strikes one's wife and children, and the charity strikes only oneself, then there is a doubt." When he spoke thus, Mr. Toogood got up, and thrusting his hands into his waistcoat pockets walked about the room, exclaiming, "By George, by George, by George!" But he still let the man go on with his story, and heard him out at last to the end.

"And they committed you for trial at the next Barchester assizes?" said the lawyer.

"They did."

"And you employed no lawyer before the magistrates?"

"None;—I refused to employ any one."

"You were wrong there, Mr. Crawley. I must be allowed to say that you were wrong there."

"I may possibly have been so from your point of view, Mr. Toogood; but permit me to explain. I——"

"It's no good explaining now. Of course you must employ a lawyer for your defence,—an attorney who will put the case into the hands of counsel."

"But that I cannot do, Mr. Toogood."

"You must do it. If you don't do it, your friends should do it for you. If you don't do it, everybody will say you're mad. There isn't a single solicitor you could find within half a mile of you at this moment who wouldn't give you the same advice,—not a single man either, who has got a head on his shoulders worth a turnip."

When Mr. Crawley was told that madness would be laid to his charge if he did not do as he was bid, his face became very black, and assumed something of that look of determined obstinacy which it had worn when he was standing in the presence of the bishop and Mrs. Proudie. "It may be so," he said. "It may be as you say, Mr. Toogood. But these neighbours of yours, as to whose collected wisdom you speak with so much certainty, would hardly recommend me to indulge in a luxury for which I have no means of paying."

"Who thinks about paying under such circumstances as these?"

"I do, Mr. Toogood."

"The wretchedest costermonger that comes to grief has a barrister in a wig and gown to give him his chance of escape."

"But I am not a costermonger, Mr. Toogood,—though more

wretched perhaps than any costermonger now in existence. It is my lot to have to endure the sufferings of poverty, and at the same time not to be exempt from those feelings of honour to which poverty is seldom subject. I cannot afford to call in legal assistance for which I cannot pay,—and I will not do it."

"I'll carry the case through for you. It certainly is not just my line of business,—but I'll see it carried through for you."

"Out of your own pocket?"

"Never mind; when I say I'll do a thing, I'll do it."

"No, Mr. Toogood; this thing you can not do. But do not suppose I am the less grateful."

"What is it I can do then? Why do you come to me if you won't take my advice?"

After this the conversation went on for a considerable time without touching on any point which need be brought palpably before the reader's eye. The attorney continued to beg the clergyman to have his case managed in the usual way, and went so far as to tell him that he would be ill-treating his wife and family if he continued to be obstinate. But the clergyman was not shaken from his resolve, and was at last able to ask Mr. Toogood what he had better do,—how he had better attempt to defend himself,—on the understanding that no legal aid was to be employed. When this question was at last asked in such a way as to demand an answer, Mr. Toogood sat for a moment or two in silence. He felt that an answer was not only demanded, but almost enforced; and yet there might be much difficulty in giving it.

"Mr. Toogood," said Mr. Crawley, seeing the attorney's hesitation, "I declare to you before God, that my only object will be to enable the jury to know about this sad matter all that I know myself. If I could open my breast to them I should be satisfied. But then a prisoner can say nothing; and what he does say is ever accounted false."

"That is why you should have legal assistance."

"We had already come to a conclusion on that matter, as I thought," said Mr. Crawley.

Mr. Toogood paused for another moment or two, and then dashed at his answer; or rather, dashed at a counter-question. "Mr. Crawley, where did you get the cheque? You must pardon me, you know;

or, if you wish it, I will not press the question. But so much hangs on that, you know."

"Everything would hang on it,—if I only knew."

"You mean that you forget?"

"Absolutely; totally. I wish, Mr. Toogood, I could explain to you the toilsome perseverance with which I have cudgelled my poor brains, endeavouring to extract from them some scintilla of memory that would aid me."

"Could you have picked it up in the house?"

"No;—no; that I did not do. Dull as I am, I know so much. It was mine of right, from whatever source it came to me. I know myself as no one else can know me, in spite of the wise man's motto. Had I picked up a cheque in my house, or on the road, I should not have slept till I had taken steps to restore it to the seeming owner. So much I can say. But, otherwise, I am in such matters so shandy-pated, that I can trust myself to be sure of nothing. I thought;—I certainly thought——"

"You thought what?"

"I thought that it had been given to me by my friend the dean. I remember well that I was in his library at Barchester and I was somewhat provoked in spirit. There were lying on the floor hundreds of volumes, all glittering with gold, and reeking with new leather from the binder's. He asked me to look at his toys. Why should I look at them? There was a time, but the other day it seemed, when he had been glad to borrow from me such treasures as I had. And it seemed to me that he was heartless in showing me these things. Well; I need not trouble you with all that."

"Go on;—go on. Let me hear it all, and I shall learn something."

"I know now how vain, how vile I was. I always know afterwards how low the spirit has grovelled. I had gone to him then because I had resolved to humble myself, and, for my wife's sake, to ask my friend —for money. With words which were very awkward,—which no doubt were ungracious,—I had asked him, and he had bid me follow him from his hall into his library. There he left me awhile, and on returning told me with a smile that he had sent for money,—and, if I can remember, the sum he named was fifty pounds."

"But it has turned out, as you say, that you have payed fifty pounds with his money,—besides the cheque."

"That is true;—that is quite true. There is no doubt of that. But as I was saying,—then he fell to talking about the books, and I was angered. I was very sore in my heart. From the moment in which the words of beggary had passed from my lips, I had repented. And he had laughed and had taken it gaily. I turned upon him and told him that I had changed my mind. I was grateful, but I would not have his money. And so I prepared to go. But he argued with me, and would not let me go,—telling me of my wife and of my children, and while he argued there came a knock at the door, and something was handed in, and I knew that it was the hand of his wife."

"It was the money, I suppose?"

"Yes, Mr. Toogood; it was the money. And I became the more uneasy, because she herself is rich. I liked it the less because it seemed to come from her hand. But I took it. What could I do when he reminded me that I could not keep my parish unless certain sums were paid? He gave me a little parcel in a cover, and I took it,—and left him sorrowing. I had never before come quite to that;—though, indeed, it had in fact been often so before. What was the difference whether the alms were given into my hands or into my wife's?"

"You are too touchy about it all, Mr. Crawley."

"Of course I am. Do you try it, and see whether you will be touchy. You have worked hard at your profession, I daresay."

"Well, yes; pretty well. To tell the truth, I have worked hard. By George, yes! It's not so bad now as it used to be."

"But you have always earned your bread; bread for yourself, and bread for your wife and little ones. You can buy tickets for the play."

"I couldn't always buy tickets, mind you."

"I have worked as hard, and yet I cannot get bread. I am older than you, and I cannot earn my bare bread. Look at my clothes. If you had to go and beg from Mr. Crump, would not you be touchy?"

"As it happens Crump isn't so well off as I am."

"Never mind. But I took it, and went home, and for two days I did not look at it. And then there came an illness upon me, and I know not what passed. But two men who had been hard on me came to the house when I was out, and my wife was in a terrible state; and I gave her the money, and she went into Silverbridge and paid them."

"And this cheque was with what you gave her?"

"No; I gave her money in notes,—just fifty pounds. When I gave it her, I thought I gave it all; and yet afterwards I thought I remembered that in my illness I had found the cheque with the dean's money. But it was not so."

"You are sure of that?"

"He has said that he put five notes of 10*l.* each into the cover, and such notes I certainly gave to my wife."

"Where then did you get the cheque?" Mr. Crawley again paused before he answered. "Surely, if you will exert your mind, you will remember," said the lawyer. "Where did you get the cheque?"

"I do not know."

Mr. Toogood threw himself back in his chair, took his knee up into his lap to nurse it, and began to think of it. He sat thinking of it for some minutes without a word,—perhaps for five minutes, though the time seemed to be much longer to Mr. Crawley, who was, however, determined that he would not interrupt him. And Mr. Toogood's thoughts were at variance with Mr. Toogood's former words. Perhaps, after all, this scheme of Mr. Crawley's,—or rather the mode of defence on which he had resolved without any scheme,—might be the best of which the case admitted. It might be well that he should go into court without a lawyer. "He has convinced me of his innocence," Mr. Toogood said to himself, "and why should he not convince a jury? He has convinced me, not because I am specially soft, or because I love the man,—for as to that I dislike him rather than otherwise;—but because there is either real truth in his words, or else so well-feigned a show of truth that no jury can tell the difference. I think it is true. By George, I think he did get the twenty pounds honestly, and that he does not at this moment know where he got it. He may have put his finger into my eye; but, if so, why not also into the eyes of a jury?" Then he released his leg, and spoke something of his thoughts aloud. "It's a sad story," he said; "a very sad story."

"Well, yes, it's sad enough. If you could see my house, you'd say so."

"I haven't a doubt but what you're as innocent as I am." Mr. Toogood, as he said this, felt a little twinge of conscience. He did believe Mr. Crawley to be innocent, but he was not so sure of it as his words would seem to imply. Nevertheless he repeated the words again;—"as innocent as I am."

"I don't know," said Mr. Crawley. "I don't know. I think I am; but I don't know."

"I believe you are. But you see the case is a very distressing one. A jury has a right to say that the man in possession of a cheque for twenty pounds should account for his possession of it. If I understand the story aright, Mr. Soames will be able to prove that he brought the cheque into your house, and, as far as he knows, never took it out again."

"I suppose so; all the same, if he brought it in, then did he also take it out again."

"I am saying what he will prove,—or, in other words, what he will state upon oath. You can't contradict him. You can't get into the box to do it,—even if that would be of any avail; and I am glad that you cannot, as it would be of no avail. And you can put no one else into the box who can do so."

"No; no."

"That is to say, we think you cannot do so. People can do so many things that they don't think they can do; and can't do so many things that they think they can do! When will the dean be home?"

"I don't know."

"Before the trial?"

"I don't know. I have no idea."

"It's almost a toss-up whether he'd do more harm or good if he were there."

"I wish he might be there if he has anything to say, whether it might be for harm or good."

"And Mrs. Arabin;—she is with him?"

"They tell me she is not. She is in Europe. He is in Palestine."

"In Palestine, is he?"

"So they tell me. A dean can go where he likes. He has no cure of souls to stand in the way of his pleasures."

"He hasn't,—hasn't he? I wish I were a dean; that is, if I were not a lawyer. Might I write a line to the dean,—and to Mrs. Dean, if it seemed fit? You wouldn't mind that? As you have come to see your cousin at last,—and very glad I am that you have,—you must leave him a little discretion. I won't say anything I oughtn't to say." Mr. Crawley opposed this scheme for some time, but at last consented to the proposition. "And I'll tell you what, Mr. Crawley; I am very

fond of cathedrals, I am indeed; and I have long wanted to see Barchester. There's a very fine what-you-may-call-'em; isn't there? Well; I'll just run down at the assizes. We have nothing to do in London when the judges are in the country,—of course." Mr. Toogood looked into Mr. Crawley's eyes as he said this, to see if his iniquity were detected, but the perpetual curate was altogether innocent in these matters. "Yes; I'll just run down for a mouthful of fresh air. Of course I shan't open my mouth in court. But I might say one word to the dean, if he's there;—and one word to Mr. Soames. Who is conducting the prosecution?" Mr. Crawley said that Mr. Walker was doing so. "Walker, Walker, Walker? oh,—yes; Walker and Winthrop, isn't it? A decent sort of man, I suppose?"

"I have heard nothing to his discredit, Mr. Toogood."

"And that's saying a great deal for a lawyer. Well, Mr. Crawley, if nothing else comes out between this and that,—nothing, that is, that shall clear your memory about that unfortunate bit of paper, you must simply tell your story to the jury as you've told it to me. I don't think any twelve men in England would convict you;—I don't indeed."

"You think they would not?"

"Of course I've only heard one side, Mr. Crawley."

"No,—no,—no, that is true."

"But judging as well as I can judge from one side, I don't think a jury can convict you. At any rate I'll see you at Barchester, and I'll write a line or two before the trial, just to find out anything that can be found out. And you're sure you won't come and take a bit of mutton with us in the Square? The girls would be delighted to see you, and so would Maria." Mr. Crawley said that he was quite sure he could not do that, and then having tendered reiterated thanks to his new friend in words which were touching in spite of their old-fashioned gravity, he took his leave, and walked back again to the public-house at Paddington.

He returned home to Hogglestock on the same afternoon, reaching that place at nine in the evening. During the whole of the day after leaving Raymond's Buildings he was thinking of the lawyer and of the words which the lawyer had spoken. Although he had been disposed to quarrel with Mr. Toogood on many points, although he had been more than once disgusted by the attorney's bad taste, shocked by his

low morality, and almost insulted by his easy familiarity, still, when the interview was over, he liked the attorney. When first Mr. Toogood had begun to talk, he regretted very much that he had subjected himself to the necessity of discussing his private affairs with such a wind-bag of a man; but when he left the chamber he trusted Mr. Toogood altogether, and was very glad that he had sought his aid. He was tired and exhausted when he reached home, as he had eaten nothing but a biscuit or two since his breakfast; but his wife got him food and tea, and then asked him as to his success. "Was my cousin kind to you?"

"Very kind,—more than kind,—perhaps somewhat too pressing in his kindness. But I find no fault. God forbid that I should. He is, I think, a good man, and certainly has been good to me."

"And what is to be done?"

"He will write to the dean."

"I am glad of that."

"And he will be at Barchester."

"Thank God for that."

"But not as my lawyer."

"Nevertheless, I thank God that some one will be there who will know how to give you assistance and advice."

"But that was not the chiefest thing that he did for me," said Mr. Crawley. "He told me that he was convinced of my innocence."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PLUMSTFAD FOXES.

THE letters had been brought into the breakfast-parlour at Plumstead Rectory one morning, and the archdeacon had inspected them all, and then thrown over to his wife her share of the spoil,—as was the custom of the house. As to most of Mrs. Grantly's letters he never made any

further inquiry. To letters from her sister, the dean's wife, he was profoundly indifferent, and rarely made any inquiry as to those which were directed in writing with which he was not familiar. But there were others as to which, as Mrs. Grantly knew, he would be sure to ask her questions if she did not show them. No note ever reached her from Lady Hartletop as to which he was not curious, and yet Lady Hartletop's notes very seldom contained much that was of interest. Now, on this morning, there came a letter which, as a matter of course, Mrs. Grantly read at breakfast, and which, she knew, would not be allowed to disappear without inquiry. Nor, indeed, did she wish to keep the letter from her husband. It was too important to be so treated. But she would have been glad to gain time to think in what spirit she would discuss the contents of the letter,—if only such time might be allowed to her. But the archdeacon would allow her no time. "What does Henry say, my dear?" he asked, before the breakfast things had been taken away.

"What does he say? Well; he says——. I'll give you his letter to read by-and-by."

"And why not now?"

"I thought I'd read it again myself, first."

"But if you have read it, I suppose you know what's in it?"

"Not very clearly, as yet. However, there it is." She knew very well that when she had once been asked for it, no peace would be allowed to her till he had seen it. And, alas! there was not much probability of peace in the house for some time after he should see it.

The archdeacon read the three or four first lines in silence,—and then he burst out. "He has; has he? Then, by heavens——."

"Stop, dearest; stop," said his wife, rising from her chair and coming over to him; "do not say words which you will surely repent."

"I will say words which shall make him repent. He shall never have from me a son's portion."

"Do not make threats in anger. Do not! You know that it is wrong. If he has offended you, say nothing about it,—even to yourself,—as to threatened punishments, till you can judge of the offence in cool blood."

"I am cool," said the archdeacon.

"No, my dear; no; you are angry. And you have not even read his letter through."

"I will read his letter."

"You will see that the marriage is not imminent. It may be that even yet it will never take place. The young lady has refused him."

"Psha!"

"You will see that she has done so. He tells us so himself. And she has behaved very properly."

"Why has she refused him?"

"There can be no doubt about the reason. She feels that, with this charge hanging over her father, she is not in a position to become the wife of any gentleman. You cannot but respect her for that."

Then the archdeacon finished his son's letter, uttering sundry interjections and ejaculations as he did so. "Of course; I knew it. I understand it all," he said at last. "I've nothing to do with the girl. I don't care whether she be good or bad."

"Oh, my dear!"

"I care not at all,—with reference to my own concerns. Of course I would wish that the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman,—that the daughter of any neighbour,—that the daughter of any one whatsoever,—should be good rather than bad. But as regards Henry and me, and our mutual relation, her goodness can make no difference. Let her be an angel, and still such a marriage must estrange him from me, and me from him."

"But she has refused him."

"Yes; and what does he say?—that he has told her that he will not accept her refusal. Of course we know what it all means. The girl I am not judging. The girl I will not judge. But my own son, to whom I have ever done a father's duty with a father's affectionate indulgence,—him I will judge. I have warned him, and he declares himself to be careless of my warning. I shall take no notice of this letter. I shall neither write to him about it, nor speak to him about it. But I charge you to write to him, and tell him that if he does this thing he shall not have a child's portion from me. It is not that I will shorten that which would have been his; but he shall have—nothing!" Then having spoken these words with a solemnity which for the moment silenced his wife, he got up and left the room. He left the room and closed the door, but before he had gone half the length of

the hall towards his own study, he returned and addressed his wife again. "You understand my instructions, I hope?"

"What instructions?"

"That you write to Henry and tell him what I say."

"I will speak again to you about it by-and-by."

"I will speak no more about it,—not a word more. Let there be not a word more said, but oblige me by doing as I ask you."

Then he was again about to leave the room, but she stopped him. "Wait a moment, my dear."

"Why should I wait?"

"That you may listen to me. Surely you will do that, when I ask you. I will write to Henry, of course, if you bid me; and I will give him your message, whatever it may be; but not to-day, my dear."

"Why not to-day?"

"Because the sun shall go down upon your wrath before I become its messenger. If you choose to write to-day yourself, I cannot help it. I cannot hinder you. If I am to write to him on your behalf I will take my instructions from you to-morrow morning. When to-morrow morning comes you will not be angry with me because of the delay."

The archdeacon was by no means satisfied; but he knew his wife too well, and himself too well, and the world too well, to insist on the immediate gratification of his passion. Over his bosom's mistress he did exercise a certain marital control,—which was, for instance, quite sufficiently fixed to enable him to look down with thorough contempt on such a one as Bishop Proudie; but he was not a despot who could exact a passive obedience to every fantasy. His wife would not have written the letter for him on that day, and he knew very well that she would not do so. He knew also that she was right;—and yet he regretted his want of power. His anger at the present moment was very hot,—so hot that he wished to wreak it. He knew that he would cool before the morrow;—and, no doubt, knew also theoretically, that it would be most fitting that it should cool. But not the less was it a matter of regret to him that so much good hot anger should be wasted, and that he could not have his will of his disobedient son while it lasted. He might, no doubt, have written himself, but to have done so would not have suited him. Even in his anger he could not have written to his son without using the ordinary terms of affection, and in his anger

he could not bring himself to use those terms. "You will find that I shall be of the same mind to-morrow,—exactly," he said to his wife. "I have resolved about it long since; and it is not likely that I shall change in a day." Then he went out, about his parish, intending to continue to think of his son's iniquity, so that he might keep his anger hot,—red-hot. Then he remembered that the evening would come, and that he would say his prayers; and he shook his head in regret,—in a regret of which he was only half conscious, though it was very keen, and which he did not attempt to analyse,—as he reflected that his rage would hardly be able to survive that ordeal. How common with us it is to repine that the devil is not stronger over us than he is.

The archdeacon, who was a very wealthy man, had purchased a property in Plumstead, contiguous to the glebe-land, and had thus come to exercise in the parish the double duty of rector and squire. And of this estate in Barsetshire, which extended beyond the confines of Plumstead into the neighbouring parish of Eiderdown, and which comprised also an outlying farm in the parish of Stogpingum,—Stoke Pinguium would have been the proper name had not barbarous Saxon tongues clipped it of its proper proportions,—he had always intended that his son Charles should enjoy the inheritance. There was other property, both in land and in money, for his elder son, and other again for the maintenance of his wife,—for the archdeacon's father had been for many years Bishop of Barchester, and such a bishopric as that of Barchester had been in those days worth money. Of his intention in this respect he had never spoken in plain language to either of his sons; but the major had for the last year or two enjoyed the shooting of the Barsetshire covers, giving what orders he pleased about the game; and the father had encouraged him to take something like the management of the property into his hands. There might be some fifteen hundred acres of it altogether, and the archdeacon had rejoiced over it with his wife scores of times, saying that there was many a squire in the county whose elder son would never find himself half so well placed as would his own younger son. Now there was a string of narrow woods called Plumstead Coppices which ran from a point near the church right across the parish, dividing the archdeacon's land from the Ullathorne estate, and these coppices, or belts of woodland, belonged to the archdeacon. On the morning of which we are speaking, the archdeacon, mounted on his cob, still thinking of his son's

iniquity and of his own fixed resolve to punish him as he had said that he would punish him, opened with his whip a woodland gate, from which a green muddy lane led through the trees up to the house of his gamekeeper. The man's wife was ill, and in his ordinary way of business the archdeacon was about to call and ask after her health. At the door of the cottage he found the man, who was woodman as well as gamekeeper, and was responsible for fences and faggots, as well as for foxes and pheasants' eggs.

"How's Martha, Flurry?" said the archdeacon.

"Thanking your reverence, she be a deal improved since the mistress was here,—last Tuesday it was, I think."

"I'm glad of that. It was only rheumatism, I suppose?"

"Just a tich of fever with it, your reverence, the doctor said."

"Tell her I was asking after it. I won't mind getting down to-day, as I am rather busy. She has had what she wanted from the house?"

"The mistress has been very good in that way. She always is, God bless her!"

"Good-day to you, Flurry. I'll ask Mr. Sims to come and read to her a bit this afternoon, or to-morrow morning." The archdeacon kept two curates, and Mr. Sims was one of them.

"She'll take it very kindly, your reverence. But while you are here, sir, there's just a word I'd like to say. I didn't happen to catch Mr. Henry when he was here the other day."

"Never mind Mr. Henry; what is it you have to say?"

"I do think, I do indeed, sir, that Mr. Thorne's man ain't dealing fairly along of the foxes. I wouldn't say a word about it, only that Mr. Henry is so particular."

"What about the foxes? What is he doing with the foxes?"

"Well, sir, he's a trapping on 'em. He is, indeed, your reverence. I wouldn't speak if I warn't well nigh mortial sure."

Now the archdeacon had never been a hunting man, though in his early days many a clergyman had been in the habit of hunting without losing his clerical character by doing so; but he had lived all his life among gentlemen in a hunting county, and had his own very strong ideas about the trapping of foxes. Foxes first and pheasants afterwards, had always been the rule with him as to any land of which he himself had had the management. And no man understood better than he did how to deal with keepers as to this matter of fox preserving, or knew

better that keepers will in truth obey not the words of their employers, but their sympathies. "Wish them to have foxes, and pay them, and they will have them," Mr. Sowerby of Chaldicotes used to say, and he in his day was reckoned to be the best preserver of foxes in Barsetshire. "Tell them to have them, and don't wish it, and pay them well, and you won't have a fox to interfere with your game. I don't care what a man says to me, I can read it all like a book when I see his coverts drawn." That was what poor Mr. Sowerby of Chaldicotes used to say, and the archdeacon had heard him say it a score of times, and had learned the lesson. But now his heart was not with the foxes,—and especially not with the foxes on behalf of his son Henry. "I can't have any meddling with Mr. Thorne," he said; "I can't and I won't.

"But I don't suppose it can be Mr. Thorne's order, your reverence; and Mr. Henry is so particular."

"Of course it isn't Mr. Thorne's order. Mr. Thorne has been a hunting man all his life."

"But he have guv' up now, your reverence. He ain't a hunted these two years."

"I'm sure he wouldn't have the foxes trapped."

"Not if he knowed it, he wouldn't, your reverence. A gentleman of the likes of him, who's been a hunting over fifty year, wouldn't do the likes of that; but the foxes is trapped, and Mr. Henry 'll be a putting it on me if I don't speak out. They is Plumstead foxes, too; and a vixen was trapped just across the field yonder, in Goshall Springs, no later than yesterday morning." Flurry was now thoroughly in earnest; and, indeed, the trapping of a vixen in February is a serious thing.

"Goshall Springs don't belong to me," said the archdeacon.

"No, your reverence; they're on the Ullathorne property. But a word from your reverence would do it. Mr. Henry thinks more of the foxes than anything. The last word he told me was that it would break his heart if he saw the coppices drawn blank."

"Then he must break his heart." The words were pronounced, but the archdeacon had so much command over himself as to speak them in such a voice that the man should not hear them. But it was incumbent on him to say something that the man should hear. "I will have no meddling in the matter, Flurry. Whether there are foxes or whether there are not, is matter of no great moment. I will not have a word said to annoy Mr. Thorne." Then he rode away,

back through the wood and out on to the road, and the horse walked with him leisurely on, whither the archdeacon hardly knew,—for he was thinking, thinking, thinking. "Well;—if that ain't the darn'dest thing that ever was," said Flurry; "but I'll tell the squire about Thorne's man,—darned if I don't." Now "the squire" was young Squire Gresham, the master of the East Barsetshire hounds.

But the archdeacon went on thinking, thinking, thinking. He could have heard nothing of his son to stir him more in his favour than this strong evidence of his partiality for foxes. I do not mean it to be understood that the archdeacon regarded foxes as better than active charity, or a contented mind, or a meek spirit, or than self-denying temperance. No doubt all these virtues did hold in his mind their proper places, altogether beyond contamination of foxes. But he had prided himself on thinking that his son should be a country gentleman, and, probably nothing doubting as to the major's active charity and other virtues, was delighted to receive evidence of those tastes which he had ever wished to encourage in his son's character. Or rather, such evidence would have delighted him at any other time than the present. Now it only added more gall to his cup. "Why should he teach himself to care for such things, when he has not the spirit to enjoy them?" said the archdeacon to himself. "He is a fool,—a fool. A man that has been married once, to go crazy after a little girl, that has hardly a dress to her back, and who never was in a drawing-room in her life! Charles is the eldest, and he shall be the eldest. It will be better to keep it together. It is the way in which the country has become what it is." He was out nearly all day, and did not see his wife till dinner time. Her father, Mr. Harding, was still with them, but had breakfasted in his own room. Not a word, therefore, was said about Henry Grantly between the father and mother on that evening.

Mrs. Grantly was determined that, unless provoked, she would say nothing to him till the following morning. He would sleep upon his wrath before she spoke to him again. And he was equally unwilling to recur to the subject. Had she permitted it, the next morning would have passed away, and no word would have been spoken. But this would not have suited her. She had his orders to write, and she had undertaken to obey these orders,—with the delay of one day. Were she not to write at all,—or in writing to send no message from the

father, there would be cause for further anger. And yet this, I think, was what the archdeacon wished.

"Archdeacon," she said, "I shall write to Henry to-day."

"Very well."

"And what am I to say from you?"

"I told you yesterday what are my intentions."

"I am not asking about that now. We hope there will be years and years to come, in which you may change them, and shape them as you will. What shall I tell him now from you?"

"I have nothing to say to him,—nothing; not a word. He knows what he has to expect from me, for I have told him. He is acting with his eyes open, and so am I. If he marries Miss Crawley, he must live on his own means. I told him that myself so plainly, that he can want no further intimation." Then Mrs. Grantly knew that she was absolved from the burden of yesterday's message, and she plumed herself on the prudence of her conduct. On the same morning the archdeacon wrote the following note;—

"DEAR THORNE,—

"My man tells me that foxes have been trapped on Darvell's farm, just outside the coppices. I know nothing of it myself, but I am sure you'll look to it.

"Yours always,

"T. GRANTLY."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MRS. PROUDIE SENDS FOR HER LAWYER.

THERE was great dismay in Barchester Palace after the visit paid to the bishop and Mrs. Proudie by that terrible clerical offender, Mr. Crawley. It will be remembered, perhaps, how he had defied the bishop with spoken words, and how he had defied the bishop's wife by speaking no words to her. For the moment, no doubt, Mr. Crawley had the best of it. Mrs. Proudie acknowledged to herself that this was the case; but as she was a woman who had never yet succumbed to an enemy, who had never,—if on such an occasion I may be allowed to use a school-boy's slang,—taken a licking from any one,—it was not likely that Mr. Crawley would be long allowed to enjoy his triumph in peace. It would be odd if all the weight of the palace would not be able to silence a wretch of a perpetual curate who had already been committed to take his trial for thieving;—and Mrs. Proudie was determined that all the weight of the palace should be used. As for the bishop, though he was not as angry as his wife, he was quite as unhappy, and therefore quite as hostile to Mr. Crawley; and was fully conscious that there could be no peace for him now until Mr. Crawley should be crushed. If only the assizes would come at once, and get him condemned out of the way, what a blessed thing it would be! But unluckily it still wanted nearly three months to the assizes, and during those three months Mr. Crawley would be at large and subject only to episcopal authority. During that time he could not be silenced by the arm of the civil law. His wife was not long in expressing her opinion after Mr. Crawley had left the palace. "You must proceed against him in the Court of Arches,—and that at once," said Mrs. Proudie. "You can do that, of course? I know that it will be expensive. Of course it will be expensive. I suppose it may cost us

some hundreds of pounds; but duty is duty, my lord, and in such a case as this your duty as a bishop is paramount.

The poor bishop knew that it was useless to explain to her the various mistakes which she made,—which she was ever making,—as to the extent of his powers and the modes of procedure which were open to him. When he would do so she would only rail at him for being lukewarm in his office, poor in spirit, and afraid of dealing roundly with those below him. On the present occasion he did say a word, but she would not even hear him to the end. "Don't tell me about rural deans, as if I didn't know. The rural dean has nothing to do with such a case. The man has been committed for trial. Send for Mr. Chadwick at once, and let steps be taken before you are an hour older."

"But, my dear, Mr. Chadwick can do nothing."

"Then I will see Mr. Chadwick." And in her anger she did sit down and write a note to Mr. Chadwick, begging him to come over to her at the palace.

Mr. Chadwick was a lawyer, living in Barchester, who earned his bread from ecclesiastical business. His father, and his uncle, and his grandfather and granduncles, had all been concerned in the affairs of the diocese of Barchester. His uncle had been bailiff to the episcopal estates, or steward as he had been called, in Bishop Grantly's time, and still contrived to draw his income in some shape from the property of the see. The nephew had also been the legal assistant of the bishop in his latter days, and had been continued in that position by Bishop Proudie, not from love, but from expediency. Mr. John Chadwick was one of those gentlemen, two or three of whom are to be seen in connection with every see,—who seem to be hybrids—half-lay, half-cleric. They dress like clergymen, and affect that mixture of clerical solemnity and clerical waggishness which is generally to be found among minor canons and vicar-chorals of a cathedral. They live, or at least have their offices, half in the Close and half out of it,—dwelling as it were just on the borders of holy orders. They always wear white neck-handkerchiefs and black gloves; and would be altogether clerical in their appearance, were it not that as regards the outward man they impinge somewhat on the characteristics of the undertaker. They savour of the church, but the savour is of the

church's exterior. Any stranger thrown into chance contact with one of them would, from instinct, begin to talk of things ecclesiastical without any refererence to things theological or things religious. They are always most worthy men, much respected in the society of the Close, and I never heard of one of them whose wife was not comfortable or whose children were left without provision.

Such a one was Mr. John Chadwick, and as it was a portion of his duties to accompany the bishop to consecrations and ordinations, he knew Dr. Proudie very well. Having been brought up, as it were, under the very wing of Bishop Grantly, it could not well be that he should love Bishop Grantly's successor. The old bishop and the new bishop had been so different that no man could like, or even esteem, them both. But Mr. Chadwick was a prudent man, who knew well the source from which he earned his bread, and he had never quarrelled with Bishop Proudie. He knew Mrs. Proudie also,—of necessity,—and when I say of him that he had hitherto avoided any open quarrel with her, it will, I think, be allowed that he was a man of prudence and sagacity.

But he had sometimes been sorely tried, and he felt when he got her note that he was now about to encounter a very sore trial. He muttered something which might have been taken for an oath, were it not that the outward signs of the man gave warranty that no oath could proceed from such a one. Then he wrote a short note presenting his compliments to Mrs. Proudie, and saying that he would call at the palace at eleven o'clock on the following morning.

But, in the mean time, Mrs. Proudie, who could not be silent on the subject for a moment, did learn something of the truth from her husband. The information did not come to her in the way of instruction, but was teased out of the unfortunate man. "I know that you can proceed against him in the Court of Arches, under the 'Church Discipline Act,'" she said.

"No, my dear; no," said the bishop, shaking his head in his misery.

"Or in the Consistorial Court. It's all the same thing."

"There must be an inquiry first,—by his brother clergy. There must indeed. It's the only way of proceeding."

"But there has been an inquiry, and he has been committed."

"That doesn't signify, my dear. That's the Civil Law."

"And if the Civil Law condemns him, and locks him up in prison;—as it most certainly will do?"

"But it hasn't done so yet, my dear. I really think that as it has gone so far, it will be best to leave it as it is till he has taken his trial."

"What! leave him there after what occurred this morning in this palace?" The palace with Mrs. Proudie was always a palace, and never a house. "No; no; ten thousand times, no. Are you not aware that he insulted you, and grossly, most grossly insulted me? I was never treated with such insolence by any clergyman before, since I first came to this palace;—never, never. And we know the man to be a thief;—we absolutely know it. Think, my lord, of the souls of his people!"

"Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear," said the bishop.

"Why do you fret yourself in that way?"

"Because you will get me into trouble. I tell you the only thing to be done is to issue a commission with the rural dean at the head of it."

"Then issue a commission."

"And they will take three months."

"Why should they take three months? Why should they take more than three days,—or three hours? It is all plain sailing."

"These things are never plain sailing, my dear. When a bishop has to oppose any of his clergy, it is always made as difficult as possible."

"More shame for them who make it so."

"But it is so. If I were to take legal proceedings against him, it would cost,—oh, dear,—more than a thousand pounds, I should say."

"If it costs two you must do it." Mrs. Proudie's anger was still very hot, or she would not have spoken of an unremunerative outlay of money in such language as that.

In this manner she did come to understand, before the arrival of Mr. Chadwick, that her husband could take no legal steps towards silencing Mr. Crawley until a commission of clergymen had been appointed to inquire into the matter, and that that commission should be headed by the rural dean within the limits of whose rural deanery the parish of Hogglestock was situated, or by some beneficed parochial clergyman of repute in the neighbourhood. Now the rural dean was Dr. Tempest

of Silverbridge,—who had held that position before the coming of Dr. Proudie to the diocese; and there had grown up in the bosom of Mrs. Proudie a strong feeling that undue mercy had been shown to Mr. Crawley by the magistrates of Silverbridge, of whom Dr. Tempest had been one. "These magistrates had taken bail for his appearance at the assizes, instead of committing him to prison at once,—as they were bound to do, when such an offence as that had been committed by a clergyman. But, no;—even though there was a clergyman among them, they had thought nothing of the souls of the poor people!" In such language Mrs. Proudie had spoken of the affair at Silverbridge, and having once committed herself to such an opinion, of course she thought that Dr. Tempest would go through fire and water,—would omit no stretch of what little judicial power might be committed to his hands,—with the view of opposing his bishop and maintaining the culprit in his position. "In such a case as this, cannot you name an acting rural dean yourself? Dr. Tempest, you know, is very old." "No, my dear; no; I cannot." "You can ask Mr. Chadwick, at any rate, and then you could name Mr. Thumble." "But Mr. Thumble doesn't even hold a living in the diocese. Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!" And so the matter rested until Mr. Chadwick came.

Mrs. Proudie had no doubt intended to have Mr. Chadwick all to herself,—at any rate so to encounter him in the first instance. But having been at length convinced that the inquiry by the rural dean was really necessary as a preliminary, and having also slept upon the question of expenditure, she gave directions that the lawyer should be shown into the bishop's study, and she took care to be absent at the moment of his arrival. Of course she did not intend that Mr. Chadwick should leave the palace without having heard what she had to say, but she thought that it would be well that he should be made to conceive that though the summons had been written by her, it had really been intended on the part of the bishop. "Mr. Chadwick will be with you at eleven, bishop," she said, as she got up from the breakfast-table, at which she left his lordship with two of his daughters and with a married son-in-law, a clergyman who was staying in the house. "Very well, my dear," said the bishop with a smile,—for he was anxious not to betray any vexation at his wife's interference before his daughters or the Rev. Mr. Tickler. But he understood it all. Mr. Chadwick had been sent for with reference to Mr. Crawley, and he was driven,—

absolutely driven, to propose to his lawyer that this commission of inquiry should be issued.

Punctually at eleven Mr. Chadwick came, wearing a very long face as he entered the palace door,—for he felt that he would in all probability be now compelled to quarrel with Mrs. Proudie. Much he could bear, but there was a limit to his endurance. She had never absolutely sent for him before, though she had often interfered with him. "I shall have to tell her a bit of my mind," he said, as he stepped across the Close, habited in his best suit of black, with most exact white cravat, and yet looking not quite like a clergyman, with some touch of the undertaker in his gait. When he found that he was shown into the bishop's room, and that the bishop was there,—and the bishop only,—his mind was relieved. It would have been better that the bishop should have written himself, or that the chaplain should have written in his lordship's name; that, however, was a trifle.

But the bishop did not know what to say to him. If he intended to direct an inquiry to be made by the rural dean, it would be by no means becoming that he should consult Mr. Chadwick as to doing so. It might be well, or if not well, at any rate not improper, that he should make the application to Dr. Tempest through Mr. Chadwick; but in that case he must give the order at once, and he still wished to avoid it if it were possible. Since he had been in the diocese no case so grave as this had been pushed upon him. The intervention of the rural dean in an ordinary way he had used,—had been made to use,—more than once, by his wife. A vicar had been absent a little too long from one parish, and there had been rumours about brandy-and-water in another. Once he had been very nearly in deep water because Mrs. Proudie had taken it in dudgeon that a certain young rector, who had been left a widower, had a very pretty governess for his children; and there had been that case, sadly notorious in the diocese at the time, of our excellent friend Mr. Robarts of Framley, when the bailiffs were in his house because he couldn't pay his debts,—or rather, the debts of his friend for whom he had signed bills. But in all these cases some good fortune had intervened, and he had been saved from the terrible necessity of any ulterior process. But now,—now he was being driven beyond himself, and all to no purpose. If Mrs. Proudie would only wait three months the civil law would do it all for him. But here was Mr. Chadwick in the room, and he knew that it would be useless for him to

attempt to talk to Mr. Chadwick about other matters, and so dismiss him. The wife of his bosom would be down upon them before Chadwick could be out of the room.

"H—m—ha. How d'ye do, Mr. Chadwick—won't you sit down?" Mr. Chadwick thanked his lordship, and sat down. "It's very cold, isn't it, Mr. Chadwick?"

"A hard frost, my lord, but a beautiful day."

"Won't you come near the fire?" The bishop knew that Mrs. Proudie was on the road, and had an eye to the proper strategical position of his forces. Mrs. Proudie would certainly take up her position in a certain chair from whence the light enabled her to rake her husband thoroughly. What advantage she might have from this he could not prevent;—but he could so place Mr. Chadwick, that the lawyer should be more within the reach of his eye than that of his wife. So the bishop pointed to an arm-chair opposite to himself and near the fire, and Mr. Chadwick seated himself accordingly.

"This is a very sad affair about Mr. Crawley," said the bishop.

"Very sad indeed," said the lawyer. "I never pitied a man so much in my life, my lord."

This was not exactly the line which the bishop was desirous of taking. "Of course he is to be pitied;—of course he is. But from all I hear, Mr. Chadwick, I am afraid,—I am afraid we must not acquit him."

"As to that, my lord, he has to stand his trial, of course."

"But, you see, Mr. Chadwick, regarding him as a beneficed clergyman,—with a cure of souls,—the question is whether I should be justified in leaving him where he is till his trial shall come on."

"Of course your lordship knows best about that, but——"

"I know there is a difficulty. I know that. But I am inclined to think that in the interests of the parish I am bound to issue a commission of inquiry."

"I believe your lordship has attempted to silence him, and that he has refused to comply."

"I thought it better for everybody's sake,—especially for his own, that he should for a while be relieved from his duties; but he is an obstinate man, a very obstinate man. I made the attempt with all consideration for his feelings."

"He is hard put to it, my lord. I know the man and his pride.

The dean has spoken of him to me more than once, and nobody knows him so well as the dean. If I might venture to offer an opinion——"

"Good morning, Mr. Chadwick," said Mrs. Proudie, coming into the room and taking her accustomed seat. "No, thank you, no; I will stay away from the fire, if you please. His lordship has spoken to you no doubt about this unfortunate, wretched man?"

"We are speaking of him now, my dear."

"Something must of course be done to put a stop to the crying disgrace of having such a man preaching from a pulpit in this diocese. When I think of the souls of the people in that poor village, my hair literally stands on end. And then he is disobedient!"

"That is the worst of it," said the bishop. "It would have been so much better for himself if he would have allowed me to provide quietly for the services till the trial be over."

"I could have told you, my lord, that he would not do that, from what I knew of him," said Mr. Chadwick.

"But he must do it," said Mrs. Proudie. "He must be made to do it."

"His lordship will find it difficult," said Mr. Chadwick.

"I can issue a commission, you know, to the rural dean," said the bishop mildly.

"Yes, you can do that. And Dr. Tempest in two months' time will have named his assessors——"

"Dr. Tempest must not name them; the bishop must name them," said Mrs. Proudie.

"It is customary to leave that to the rural dean," said Mr. Chadwick. "The bishop no doubt can object to any one named."

"And can specially select any clergyman he pleases from the archdeaconry," said the bishop. "I have known it done."

"The rural dean in such case has probably been an old man, and not active," said the lawyer.

"And Dr. Tempest is a very old man," said Mrs. Proudie, "and in such a matter not at all trustworthy. He was one of the magistrates who took bail."

"His lordship could hardly set him aside," said the lawyer. "At any rate I would not recommend him to try. I think you might suggest a commission of five, and propose two of the number yourself. I do not think that in such a case Dr. Tempest would raise any question."

At last it was settled in this way. Mr. Chadwick was to prepare a letter to Dr. Tempest, for the bishop's signature, in which the doctor should be requested, as the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley was subject, to hold a commission of five to inquire into Mr. Crawley's conduct. The letter was to explain to Dr. Tempest that the bishop, moved by his solicitude for the souls of the people of Hogglestock, had endeavoured, "in a friendly way," to induce Mr. Crawley to desist from his ministrations; but that having failed through Mr. Crawley's obstinacy, he had no alternative but to proceed in this way. "You had better say that his lordship, as bishop of the diocese, can take no heed of the coming trial," said Mrs. Proudie. "I think his lordship had better say nothing at all about the trial," said Mr. Chadwick. "I think that will be best," said the bishop.

"But if they report against him," said Mr. Chadwick, "you can only then proceed in the ecclesiastical court,—at your own expense."

"He'll hardly be so obstinate as that," said the bishop.

"I'm afraid you don't know him, my lord," said the lawyer. The bishop, thinking of the scene which had taken place in that very room only yesterday, felt that he did know Mr. Crawley, and felt also that the hope which he had just expressed was one in which he himself put no trust. But something might turn up; and it was devoutly to be hoped that Dr. Tempest would take a long time over his inquiry. The assizes might come on as soon as it was terminated, or very shortly afterwards; and then everything might be well. "You won't find Dr. Tempest very ready at it," said Mr. Chadwick. The bishop in his heart was comforted by the words. "But he must be made to be ready to do his duty," said Mrs. Proudie, imperiously. Mr. Chadwick shrugged his shoulders, then got up, spoke his farewell little speeches, and left the palace.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LILY DALE WRITES TWO WORDS IN HER BOOK.

JOHN EAMES saw nothing more of Lily Dale till he packed up his portmanteau, left his mother's house, and went to stay for a few days with his old friend Lady Julia; and this did not happen till he had been above a week at Guestwick. Mrs. Dale repeatedly said that it was odd that Johnny did not come to see them; and Grace, speaking of him to Lily, asked why he did not come. Lily, in her funny way, declared that he would come soon enough. But even while she was joking there was something of half-expressed consciousness in her words,—as though she felt it to be foolish to speak of his coming as she might of that of any other young man, before people who knew her whole story. "He'll come quick enough. He knows, and I know, that his coming will do no good. Of course I shall be glad to see him. Why shouldn't I be glad to see him? I've known him and liked him all my life. I liked him when there did not seem to be much about him to like, and now that he is clever, and agreeable, and good-looking,—which he never was as a lad,—why shouldn't I go on liking him? He's more like a brother to me than anybody else I've got. James,"—James was her brother-in-law, Dr. Crofts,—"thinks of nothing but his patients and his babies, and my cousin Bernard is much too grand a person for me to take the liberty of loving him. I shall be very glad to see Johnny Eames." From all which Mrs. Dale was led to believe that Johnny's case was still hopeless. And how should it not be hopeless? Had Lily not confessed within the last week or two that she still loved Adolphus Crosbie?

Mrs. Eames also, and Mary, were surprised that John did not go over to Allington. "You haven't seen Mrs. Dale yet, or the squire?" said his mother.

"I shall see them when I am at the cottage."

"Yes;—no doubt. But it seems strange that you should be here so long without going to them."

"There's time enough," said he. "I shall have nothing else to do when I'm at the cottage." Then, when Mary had spoken to him again in private, expressing a hope that there was "nothing wrong," he had been very angry with his sister. "What do you mean by wrong? What rubbish you girls talk! and you never have any delicacy of feeling to make you silent."

"Oh, John, don't say such hard things as that of me!"

"But I do say them. You'll make me swear among you some day that I will never see Lily Dale again. As it is, I wish I never had seen her,—simply because I'm so dunned about it." In all of which I think that Johnny was manifestly wrong. When the humour was on him he was fond enough of talking about Lily Dale. Had he not taught her to do so, I doubt whether his sister would ever have mentioned Lily's name to him. "I did not mean to dun you, John," said Mary, meekly.

But at last he went to Lady Julia's, and was no sooner there than he was ready to start for Allington. When Lady Julia spoke to him about Lily, he did not venture to snub her. Indeed, of all his friends, Lady Julia was the one with whom on this subject he allowed himself the most unrestricted confidence. He came over one day, just before dinner, and declared his intention of walking over to Allington immediately after breakfast on the following morning. "It's the last time, Lady Julia," he said.

"So you say, Johnny."

"And so I mean it! What's the good of a man frittering away his life? What's the good of wishing for what you can't get?"

"Jacob was not in such a hurry when he wished for Rachel."

"That was all very well for an old patriarch who had seven or eight hundred years to live."

"My dear John, you forget your Bible. Jacob did not live half as long as that."

"He lived long enough, and slowly enough, to be able to wait fourteen years;—and then he had something to comfort him in the mean time. And, after all, Lady Julia, it's more than seven years since I first thought Lily was the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"How old are you now?"

"Twenty-seven,—and she's twenty-four."

"You've time enough yet, if you'll only be patient."

"I'll be patient for to-morrow, Lady Julia, but never again. Not that I mean to quarrel with her. I'm not such a fool as to quarrel with a girl because she can't like me. I know how it all is. If that scoundrel had not come across my path just when he did,—in that very nick of time, all might have been right betwixt her and me. I couldn't have offered to marry her before, when I hadn't as much income as would have found her in bread-and-butter. And then, just as better times came to me, he stepped in! I wonder whether it will be expected of me that I should forgive him?"

"As far as that goes, you have no right to be angry with him."

"But I am,—all the same."

"And so was I,—but not for stepping in, as you call it."

"You and I are different, Lady Julia. I was angry with him for stepping in; but I couldn't show it. Then he stepped out, and I did manage to show it. And now I shouldn't wonder if he doesn't step in again. After all, why should he have such a power? It was simply the nick of time which gave it to him." That John Eames should be able to find some consolation in this consideration is devoutly to be hoped by us all.

There was nothing said about Lily Dale the next morning at breakfast. Lady Julia observed that John was dressed a little more neatly than usual;—though the change was not such as to have called for her special observation, had she not known the business on which he was intent.

"You have nothing to send to the Dales?" he said, as he got up from the table.

"Nothing but my love, Johnny."

"No worsted or embroidery work,—or a pot of special jam for the squire?"

"No, sir, nothing; though I should like to make you carry a pair of panniers, if I could."

"They would become me well," said Johnny, "for I am going on an ass's errand." Then, without waiting for the word of affection which was on the old woman's lips, he got himself out of the room, and started on his journey.

The walk was only three miles and the weather was dry and frosty,

and he had come to the turn leading up to the church and the squire's house almost before he remembered that he was near Allington. Here he paused for a moment to think. If he continued his way down by the "Red Lion" and through Allington Street, he must knock at Mrs. Dale's door, and ask for admission by means of the servant,—as would be done by any ordinary visitor. But he could make his way on to the lawn by going up beyond the wall of the churchyard and through the squire's garden. He knew the path well,—very well; and he thought that he might take so much liberty as that, both with the squire and with Mrs. Dale, although his visits to Allington were not so frequent now as they used to be in the days of his boyhood. He did not wish to be admitted by the servant, and therefore he went through the gardens. Luckily he did not see the squire, who would have detained him, and he escaped from Hopkins, the old gardener, with little more than a word. "I'm going down to see the ladies, Hopkins; I suppose I shall find them?" And then, while Hopkins was arranging his spade so that he might lean upon it for a little chat, Johnny was gone and had made his way into the other garden. He had thought it possible that he might meet Lily out among the walks by herself, and such a meeting as this would have suited him better than any other. And as he crossed the little bridge which separated the gardens he thought of more than one such meeting,—of one especial occasion on which he had first ventured to tell her in plain words that he loved her. But before that day Crosbie had come there, and at the moment in which he was speaking of his love she regarded Crosbie as an angel of light upon the earth. What hope could there have been for him then? What use was there in his telling such a tale of love at that time? When he told it, he knew that Crosbie had been before him. He knew that Crosbie was at that moment the angel of light. But as he had never before been able to speak of his love, so was he then unable not to speak of it. He had spoken, and of course had been simply rebuked. Since that day Crosbie had ceased to be an angel of light, and he, John Eames, had spoken often. But he had spoken in vain, and now he would speak once again.

He went through the garden and over the lawn belonging to the Small House and saw no one. He forgot, I think, that ladies do not come out to pick roses when the ground is frozen, and that croquet is not often in progress with the hoar-frost on the grass. So he walked

up to the little terrace before the drawing-room, and looking in saw Mrs. Dale, and Lily, and Grace at their morning work. Lily was drawing, and Mrs. Dale was writing, and Grace had her needle in her hand. As it happened, no one at first perceived him, and he had time to feel that after all he would have managed better if he had been announced in the usual way. As, however, it was now necessary that he should announce himself, he knocked at the window, and they all immediately looked up and saw him. "It's my cousin John," said Grace. "Oh, Johnny, how are you at last?" said Mrs. Dale. But it was Lily who, without speaking, opened the window for him, who was the first to give him her hand, and who led him through into the room.

"It's a great shame my coming in this way," said John, "and letting all the cold air in upon you."

"We shall survive it," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose you have just come down from my brother-in-law?"

"No; I have not seen the squire as yet. I will do so before I go back, of course. But it seemed such a common-place sort of thing to go round by the village."

"We are very glad to see you, by whatever way you come;—are we not, mamma?" said Lily.

"I'm not so sure of that. We were only saying yesterday that as you had been in the country a fortnight without coming to us, we did not think we would be at home when you did come."

"But I have caught you, you see," said Johnny.

And so they went on, chatting of old times and of mutual friends very comfortably for full an hour. And there was some serious conversation about Grace's father and his affairs, and John declared his opinion that Mr. Crawley ought to go to his uncle, Thomas Toogood, not at all knowing at that time that Mr. Crawley himself had come to the same opinion. And John gave them an elaborate description of Sir Raffle Buffle, standing up with his back to the fire with his hat on his head, and speaking with a loud harsh voice, to show them the way in which he declared that that gentleman received his inferiors; and then bowing and scraping and rubbing his hands together and simpering with would-be softness,—declaring that after that fashion Sir Raffle received his superiors. And they were very merry,—so that no one would have thought that Johnny was a despondent lover, now bent on

throwing the dice for his last stake; or that Lily was aware that she was in the presence of one lover, and that she was like to fall to the ground between two stools,—having two lovers, neither of whom could serve her turn.

"How can you consent to serve him if he's such a man as that?" said Lily, speaking of Sir Raffle.

"I do not serve him. I serve the Queen,—or rather the public. I don't take his wages, and he does not play his tricks with me. He knows that he can't. He has tried it, and has failed. And he only keeps me where I am because I've had some money left me. He thinks it fine to have a private secretary with a fortune. I know that he tells people all manner of lies about it, making it out to be five times as much as it is. Dear old Huffle Snuffle. He is such an ass; and yet he's had wit enough to get to the top of the tree, and to keep himself there. He began the world without a penny. Now he has got a handle to his name, and he'll live in clover all his life. It's very odd, isn't it, Mrs. Dale?"

"I suppose he does his work?"

"When men get so high as that, there's no knowing whether they work or whether they don't. There isn't much for them to do, as far as I can see. They have to look beautiful, and frighten the young ones."

"And does Sir Raffle look beautiful?" Lily asked.

"After a fashion, he does. There is something imposing about such a man till you're used to it, and can see through it. Of course it's all padding. There are men who work, no doubt. But among the bigwigs, and bishops and cabinet ministers, I fancy that the looking beautiful is the chief part of it. Dear me, you don't mean to say it's luncheon time?"

But it was luncheon time, and not only had he not as yet said a word of all that which he had come to say, but had not as yet made any move towards getting it said. How was he to arrange that Lily should be left alone with him? Lady Julia had said that she should not expect him back till dinner-time, and he had answered her lackadaisically, "I don't suppose I shall be there above ten minutes. Ten minutes will say all I've got to say, and do all I've got to do. And then I suppose that I shall go and cut names about upon bridges, —eh, Lady Julia?" Lady Julia understood his words; for once, upon

a former occasion, she had found him cutting Lily's name on the rail of a wooden bridge in her brother's grounds. But he had now been a couple of hours at the Small House, and had not said a word of that which he had come to say.

"Are you going to walk out with us after lunch?" said Lily.

"He will have had walking enough," said Mrs. Dale.

"We'll convoy him back part of the way," said Lily.

"I'm not going yet," said Johnny, "unless you turn me out."

"But we must have our walk before it is dark," said Lily.

"You might go up with him to your uncle," said Mrs. Dale. "Indeed, I promised to go up myself, and so did you, Grace, to see the microscope. I heard Mr. Dale give orders that one of those long-legged reptiles should be caught on purpose for your inspection."

Mrs. Dale's little scheme for bringing the two together was very transparent, but it was not the less wise on that account. Schemes will often be successful, let them be ever so transparent. Little intrigues become necessary, not to conquer unwilling people, but people who are willing enough, who, nevertheless, cannot give way except under the machinations of an intrigue.

"I don't think I'll mind looking at the long-legged creature to-day," said Johnny.

"I must go, of course," said Grace.

Lily said nothing at the moment, either about the long-legged creature or the walk. That which must be, must be. She knew well why John Eames had come there. She knew that the visits to his mother and to Lady Julia would never have been made, but that he might have this interview. And he had a right to demand, at any rate, as much as that. That which must be, must be. And therefore when both Mrs. Dale and Grace stoutly maintained their purpose of going up to the squire, Lily neither attempted to persuade John to accompany them, nor said that she would do so herself.

"I will convoy you home myself," she said, "and Grace, when she has done with the beetle, shall come and meet me. Won't you, Grace?"

"Certainly."

"We are not helpless young ladies in these parts, nor yet timorous," continued Lily. "We can walk about without being afraid of ghosts, robbers, wild bulls, young men, or gipsies. Come the field path, Grace. I will go as far as the big oak with him, and then I shall turn back,

and I shall come in by the stile opposite the church gate, and through the garden. So you can't miss me."

"I daresay he'll come back with you," said Grace.

"No, he won't. He will do nothing of the kind. He'll have to go on and open Lady Julia's bottle of port wine for his own drinking"

All this was very good on Lily's part, and very good also on the part of Mrs. Dale; and John was of course very much obliged to them. But there was a lack of romance in it all, which did not seem to him to argue well as to his success. He did not think much about it, but he felt that Lily would not have been so ready to arrange their walk had she intended to yield to his entreaty. No doubt in these latter days plain good sense had become the prevailing mark of her character,—perhaps, as Johnny thought, a little too strongly prevailing; but even with all her plain good sense and determination to dispense with the absurdities of romance in the affairs of her life, she would not have proposed herself as his companion for a walk across the fields merely that she might have an opportunity of accepting his hand. He did not say all this to himself, but he instinctively felt that it was so. And he felt also that it should have been his duty to arrange the walk, or the proper opportunity for the scene that was to come. She had done it instead,—she and her mother between them, thereby forcing upon him a painful conviction that he himself had not been equal to the occasion. "I always make a mull of it," he said to himself, when the girls went up to get their hats.

They went down together through the garden, and parted where the paths led away, one to the Great House and the other towards the church. "I'll certainly come and call upon the squire before I go back to London," said Johnny.

"We'll tell him so," said Mrs. Dale. "He would be sure to hear that you had been with us, even if we said nothing about it."

"Of course he would," said Lily; "Hopkins has seen him." Then they separated, and Lily and John Eames were together.

Hardly a word was said, perhaps not a word, till they had crossed the road and got into the field opposite to the church. And in this first field there was more than one path, and the children of the village were often there, and it had about it something of a public nature. John Eames felt that it was by no means a fitting field to say that which he had to say. In crossing it, therefore, he merely remarked that

the day was very fine for walking. Then he added one special word, "And it is so good of you, Lily, to come with me."

"I am very glad to come with you. I would do more than that, John, to show how glad I am to see you." Then they had come to the second little gate, and beyond that the fields were really fields, and there were stiles instead of wicket-gates, and the business of the day must be begun.

"Lily, whenever I come here you say you are glad to see me?"

"And so I am,—very glad. Only that you would take it as meaning what it does not mean, I would tell you, that of all my friends living away from the reach of my daily life, you are the one whose coming is ever the most pleasant to me."

"Oh, Lily!"

"It was, I think, only yesterday that I was telling Grace that you are more like a brother to me than any one else. I wish it might be so. I wish we might swear to be brother and sister. I'd do more for you then than walk across the fields with you to Guestwick Cottage. Your prosperity would then be the thing in the world for which I should be most anxious. And if you should marry——"

"It can never be like that between us," said Johnny.

"Can it not? I think it can. Perhaps not this year, or next year; perhaps not in the next five years. But I make myself happy with thinking that it may be so some day. I shall wait for it patiently, very patiently, even though you should rebuff me again and again,—as you have done now."

"I have not rebuffed you."

"Not maliciously, or injuriously, or offensively. I will be very patient and take little rebuffs without complaining. This is the worst stile of all. When Grace and I are here together we can never manage it without tearing ourselves all to pieces. It is much nicer to have you to help me."

"Let me help you always," he said, keeping her hands in his after he had aided her to jump from the stile to the ground.

"Yes, as my brother."

"That is nonsense, Lily."

"Is it nonsense? Nonsense is a hard word."

"It is nonsense as coming from you to me. Lily, I sometimes think that I am persecuting you, writing to you, coming after you, as I am

doing now,—telling the same whining story, asking, asking, and asking for that which you say you will never give me. And then I feel ashamed of myself, and swear that I will do it no more."

"Do not be ashamed of yourself; but yet do it no more."

"And then," he continued, without minding her words, "at other times I feel that it must be my own fault; that if I only persevered with sufficient energy I must be successful. At such times I swear that I will never give it up."

"Oh, John, if you could only know how little worthy of such pursuit it is."

"Leave me to judge of that, dear. When a man has taken a month, or perhaps only a week, or perhaps not more than half an hour, to make up his mind, it may be very well to tell him that he doesn't know what he is about. I've been in the office now for over seven years, and the first day I went I put an oath into a book that I would come back and get you for my wife when I had got enough to live upon."

"Did you, John?"

"Yes. I can show it you. I used to come and hover about the place in the old days, before I went to London, when I was such a fool that I couldn't speak to you if I met you. I am speaking of a time long before,—before that man came down here."

"Do not speak of him, Johnny."

"I must speak of him. A man isn't to hold his tongue when everything he has in the world is at stake. I suppose he loved you after a fashion, once."

"Pray, pray do not speak ill of him."

"I am not going to abuse him. You can judge of him by his deeds. I cannot say anything worse of him than what they say. I suppose he loved you; but he certainly did not love you as I have done. I have at any rate been true to you. Yes, Lily, I have been true to you. I am true to you. He did not know what he was about. I do. I am justified in saying that I do. I want you to be my wife. It is no use your talking about it as though I only half wanted it."

"I did not say that."

"Is not a man to have any reward? Of course if you had married him there would have been an end of it. He had come in between me and my happiness, and I must have borne it, as other men bear such sorrows. But you have not married him; and of course, I cannot but

feel that I may yet have a chance. Lily, answer me this. Do you believe that I love you?" But she did not answer him. "You can at any rate tell me that. Do you think that I am in earnest?"

"Yes, I think you are in earnest."

"And do you believe that I love you with all my heart and all my strength and all my soul?"

"Oh, John!"

"But do you?"

"I think you love me."

"Think! What am I to say or to do to make you understand that my only idea of happiness is the idea that sooner or later I may get you to be my wife? Lily, will you say that it shall be so? Speak, Lily. There is no one that will not be glad. Your uncle will consent,—has consented. Your mother wishes it. Bell wishes it. My mother wishes it. Lady Julia wishes it. You would be doing what everybody wants you to do. And why should you not do it? It isn't that you dislike me. You wouldn't talk about being my sister, if you had not some sort of regard for me."

"I have a regard for you."

"Then why will you not be my wife? Oh, Lily, say the word now, here, at once. Say the word, and you'll make me the happiest fellow in all England." As he spoke he took her by both arms, and held her fast. She did not struggle to get away from him, but stood quite still, looking into his face, while the first sparkle of a salt tear formed itself in each eye. "Lily, one little word will do it,—half a word, a nod, a smile. Just touch my arm with your hand and I will take it for a yes." I think that she almost tried to touch him; that the word was in her throat and that she almost strove to speak it. But there was no syllable spoken, and her fingers did not loose themselves to fall upon his sleeve. "Lily, Lily, what can I say to you?"

"I wish I could," she whispered;—but the whisper was so hoarse that he hardly recognised the voice.

"And why can you not? What is there to hinder you? There is nothing to hinder you, Lily."

"Yes, John; there is that which must hinder me."

"And what is it?"

"I will tell you. You are so good and so true, and so excellent,—such a dear, dear, dear friend, that I will tell you everything, so that

you may read my heart. I will tell you as I tell mamma,—you and her and no one else;—for you are the choice friend of my heart. I cannot be your wife because of the love I bear for another man."

"And that man is he,—he who came here?"

"Of course it is he. I think, Johnny, you and I are alike in this, that when we have loved we cannot bring ourselves to change. You will not change, though it would be so much better you should do so."

"No; I will never change."

"Nor can I. When I sleep I dream of him. When I am alone I cannot banish him from my thoughts. I cannot define what it is to love him. I want nothing from him,—nothing, nothing. But I move about through my little world thinking of him, and I shall do so to the end. I used to feel proud of my love, though it made me so wretched that I thought it would kill me. I am not proud of it any longer. It is a foolish poor-spirited weakness,—as though my heart had been only half formed in the making. Do you be stronger, John. A man should be stronger than a woman."

"I have none of that sort of strength."

"Nor have I. What can we do but pity each other, and swear that we will be friends,—dear friends. There is the oak-tree, and I have got to turn back. We have said everything that we can say—unless you will tell me that you will be my brother."

"No; I will not tell you that."

"Good-bye, then, Johnny."

He paused, holding her by the hand and thinking of another question which he longed to put to her,—considering whether he would ask her that question or not. He hardly knew whether he were entitled to ask it;—whether or no the asking of it would be ungenerous. She had said that she would tell him everything,—as she had told everything to her mother. "Of course," he said, "I have no right to expect to know anything of your future intentions?"

"You may know them all,—as far as I know them myself. I have said that you should read my heart."

"If this man, whose name I cannot bear to mention, should come again——"

"If he were to come again he would come in vain, John." She did not say that he had come again. She could tell her own secret, but not that of another person.

"You would not marry him, now that he is free?"

She stood and thought awhile before she answered him. "No, I should not marry him now. I think not." Then she paused again. "Nay, I am sure I would not. After what has passed I could not trust myself to do it. There is my hand on it. I will not."

"No, Lily, I do not want that."

"But I insist. I will not marry Mr. Crosbie. But you must not misunderstand me, John. There;—all that is over for me now. All those dreams about love, and marriage, and of a house of my own, and children,—and a cross husband, and a wedding-ring growing always tighter as I grow fatter and older. I have dreamed of such things as other girls do,—more perhaps than other girls, more than I should have done. And now I accept the thing as finished. You wrote something in your book, you dear John,—something that could not be made to come true. Dear John, I wish for your sake it was otherwise. I will go home and I will write in my book, this very day, Lilian Dale, Old Maid. If ever I make that false, do you come and ask me for the page."

"Let it remain there till I am allowed to tear it out."

"I will write it, and it shall never be torn out. You I cannot marry. Him I will not marry. You may believe me, Johnny, when I say there can never be a third."

"And is that to be the end of it?"

"Yes;—that is to be the end of it. Not the end of our friendship. Old maids have friends."

"It shall not be the end of it. There shall be no end of it with me."

"But, John——"

"Do not suppose that I will trouble you again,—at any rate not for a while. In five years' time perhaps——"

"Now, Johnny, you are laughing at me. And of course it is the best way. If there is not Grace, and she has caught me before I have turned back. Good-bye, dear, dear John. God bless you. I think you the finest fellow there is in the world. I do, and so does mamma. Remember always that there is a temple at Allington in which your worship is never forgotten." Then she pressed his hand and turned away from him to meet Grace Crawley. John did not stop to speak a word to his cousin, but pursued his way alone.

"That cousin of yours," said Lily, "is simply the dearest, warmest-hearted, finest creature that ever was seen in the shape of a man."

"Have you told him that you think him so?" said Grace.

"Indeed, I have," said Lily.

"But have you told this finest, warmest, dearest creature that he shall be rewarded with the prize he covets?"

"No, Grace. I have told him nothing of the kind. I think he understands it all now. If he does not, it is not for the want of my telling him. I don't suppose any lady was ever more open-spoken to a gentleman than I have been to him."

"And why have you sent him away disappointed? You know you love him."

"You see, my dear," said Lily, "you allow yourself, for the sake of your argument, to use a word in a double sense, and you attempt to confound me by doing so. But I am a great deal too clever for you, and have thought too much about it, to be taken in in that way. I certainly love your cousin John; and so I do love Mr. Boyce, the vicar."

"You love Johnny much better than you do Mr. Boyce."

"True; very much better; but it is the same sort of love. However, it is a great deal too deep for you to understand. You're too young, and I shan't try to explain it. But the long and the short of it is,—I am not going to marry your cousin."

"I wish you were," said Grace, "with all my heart."

John Eames as he returned to the cottage was by no means able to fall back upon those resolutions as to his future life, which he had formed for himself and communicated to his friend Dalrymple and which he had intended to bring at once into force in the event of his being again rejected by Lily Dale. "I will cleanse my mind of it altogether," he had said, "and though I may not forget her, I will live as though she were forgotten. If she declines my proposal again, I will accept her word as final. I will not go about the world any longer as a stricken deer,—to be pitied or else bullied by the rest of the herd." On his way down to Guestwick he had sworn twenty times that it should be so. He would make one more effort, and then he would give it up. But now, after his interview with Lily, he was as little disposed to give it up as ever.

He sat upon a gate in a paddock through which there was a back

entrance into Lady Julia's garden, and there swore a thousand oaths that he would never give her up. He was, at any rate, sure that she would never become the wife of any one else. He was equally sure that he would never become the husband of any other wife. He could trust her. Yes; he was sure of that. But could he trust himself? Communing with himself, he told himself that after all he was but a poor creature. Circumstances had been very good to him, but he had done nothing for himself. He was vain, and foolish, and unsteady. So he told himself while sitting upon the gate. But he had, at any rate, been constant to Lily, and constant he would remain.

He would never more mention her name to any one,—unless it were to Lady Julia to-night. To Dalrymple he would not open his mouth about her, but would plainly ask his friend to be silent on that subject if her name should be mentioned by him. But morning and evening he would pray for her, and in his prayers he would always think of her as his wife. He would never speak to another girl without remembering that he was bound to Lily. He would go nowhere into society without recalling to mind the fact that he was bound by the chains of a solemn engagement. If he knew himself he would be constant to Lily.

And then he considered in what manner it would be best and most becoming that he should still prosecute his endeavour and repeat his offer. He thought that he would write to her every year, on the same day of the year, year after year, it might be for the next twenty years. And his letters should be very simple. Sitting there on the gate he planned the wording of his letters;—of his first letter, and of his second, and of his third. They should be very like to each other,—should hardly be more than a repetition of the same words,—"If now you are ready for me, then, Lily, am I, as ever, still ready for you." And then "if now" again, and again "if now;"—and still "if now." When his hair should be grey, and the wrinkles on his cheeks,—ay, though they should be on hers, he would still continue to tell her from year to year that he was ready to take her. Surely some day that "if now" would prevail. And should it never prevail, the merit of his constancy should be its own reward.

Such letters as those she would surely keep. Then he looked forward, down into the valley of coming years, and fancied her as she might sit reading them in the twilight of some long evening,—letters which had

been written all in vain. He thought that he could look forward with some satisfaction towards the close of his own career, in having been the hero of such a love-story. At any rate, if such a story were to be his story, the melancholy attached to it should arise from no fault of his own. He would still press her to be his wife. And then as he remembered that he was only twenty-seven and that she was twenty-four, he began to marvel at the feeling of grey old age which had come upon him, and tried to make himself believe that he would have her yet before the bloom was off her cheek.

He went into the cottage and made his way at once into the room in which Lady Julia was sitting. She did not speak at first, but looked anxiously into his face. And he did not speak, but turned to a table near the window and took up a book,—though the room was too dark for him to see to read the words. "John," at last said Lady Julia.

"Well, my lady?"

"Have you nothing to tell me, John?"

"Nothing on earth,—except the same old story, which has now become a matter of course."

"But, John, will you not tell me what she has said?"

"Lady Julia, she has said no; simply no. It is a very easy word to say, and she has said it so often that it seems to come from her quite naturally." Then he got a candle and sat down over the fire with a volume of a novel. It was not yet past five, and Lady Julia did not go upstairs to dress till six, and therefore there was an hour during which they were together. John had at first been rather grand to his old friend, and very uncommunicative. But before the dressing-bell had rung he had been coaxed into a confidential strain and had told everything. "I suppose it is wrong and selfish," he said. "I suppose I am a dog in a manger. But I do own that there is a consolation to me in the assurance that she will never be the wife of that scoundrel."

"I would never forgive her if she were to marry him now," said Lady Julia.

"I could never forgive him. But she has said that she will not, and I know that she will not forswear herself. I shall go on with it, Lady Julia. I have made up my mind to that. I suppose it will never come to anything, but I shall stick to it. I can live an old

bachelor as well as another man. At any rate I shall stick to it. Then the good silly old woman comforted him and applauded him as though he were a hero among men, and did reward him, as Lily had predicted, by one of those now rare bottles of superexcellent port which had come to her from her brother's cellar.

John Eames stayed out his time at the cottage, and went over more than once again to Allington, and called on the squire, on one occasion dining with him and meeting the three ladies from the Small House; and he walked with the girls, comporting himself like any ordinary man. But he was not again alone with Lily Dale, nor did he learn whether she had in truth written those two words in her book. But the reader may know that she did write them there on the evening of the day on which the promise was made. "Lilian Dale,—Old Maid."

And when John's holiday was over, he returned to his duties at the elbow of Sir Raffle Buffle.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GRACE CRAWLEY RETURNS HOME.

About this time Grace Crawley received two letters, the first of them reaching her while John Eames was still at the cottage, and the other immediately after his return to London. They both help to tell our story, and our reader shall, therefore, read them if he so please,—or, rather, he shall read the first and as much of the second as is necessary for him. Grace's answer to the first letter he shall see also. Her answer to the second will be told in a very few words. The first was from Major Grantly, and the task of answering that was by no means easy to Grace.

"Cosby Lodge, — February, 186—.

"DEAREST GRACE,

"I TOLD you when I parted from you, that I should write to you, and I think it best to do so at once, in order that you may fully understand me. Spoken words are soon forgotten;"—"I shall never forget his words," Grace said to herself as she read this;—"and are not always as plain as they might be. Dear Grace, I suppose I ought not to say so, but I fancied when I parted from you at Allington that I had succeeded in making myself dear to you. I believe you to be so true in spirit, that you were unable to conceal from me the fact that you love me. I shall believe that this is so, till I am deliberately and solemnly assured by yourself that it is not so;—and I conjure you to think what is due both to yourself and to myself, before you allow yourself to think of making such an assurance unless it be strictly true.

"I have already told my own friends that I have asked you to be my wife. I tell you this, in order that you may know how little effect your answer to me has had towards inducing me to give you up. What you said about your father and your family has no weight with me, and ought ultimately to have none with you. This business of your father's is a great misfortune,—so great that, probably, had we not known each other before it happened, it might have prevented our becoming intimate when we chanced to meet. But we had met before it happened, and before it happened I had determined to ask you to be my wife. What should I have to think of myself if I allowed my heart to be altered by such a cause as that?

"I have only further to say that I love you better than any one in the world, and that it is my best hope that you will be my wife. I will not press you till this affair of your father's has been settled; but when that is over I shall look for my reward without reference to its result. Not that I doubt the result if there be anything like justice in England; but that your debt to me, if you owe me any debt, will be altogether irrespective of that. If, as I suppose, you will remain at Allington for some time longer, I shall not see you till after the trial is over. As soon as that is done, I will come to you wherever you are. In the mean time I shall look for an answer to this; and if it be true that you love me, dear, dear Grace, pray have the courage to tell me so.

"Most affectionately your own,

"HENRY GRANTLY."

When the letter was given to Grace across the breakfast-table, both Mrs. Dale and Lily suspected that it came from Major Grantly, but not a word was spoken about it. When Grace with hesitating hand broke the envelope, neither of her friends looked at her. Lily had a letter of her own, and Mrs. Dale opened the newspaper. But still it was impossible not to perceive that her face became red with blushes, and then they knew that the letter must be from Major Grantly. Grace herself could not read it, though her eye ran down over the two pages catching a word here and a word there. She had looked at the name at once, and had seen the manner of his signature. "Most affectionately your own!" What was she to say to him? Twice, thrice, as she sat at the breakfast-table she turned the page of the letter, and at each turning she read the signature. And she read the beginning, "Dearest Grace." More than that she did not really read till she had got the letter away with her into the seclusion of her own room.

Not a word was said about the letter at breakfast. Poor Grace went on eating or pretending to eat, but could not bring herself to utter a word. Mrs. Dale and Lily spoke of various matters, which were quite indifferent to them; but even with them the conversation was so difficult that Grace felt it to be forced, and was conscious that they were thinking about her and her lover. As soon as she could make an excuse she left the room, and hurrying upstairs took the letter from her pocket and read it in earnest.

"That was from Major Grantly, mamma," said Lily.

"I daresay it was, my dear."

"And what had we better do; or what had we better say?"

"Nothing,—I should say. Let him fight his own battle. If we interfere, we may probably only make her more stubborn in clinging to her old idea."

"I think she will cling to it."

"For a time she will, I daresay. And it will be best that she should. He himself will respect her for it afterwards." Thus it was agreed between them that they should say nothing to Grace about the letter unless Grace should first speak to them.

Grace read her letter over and over again. It was the first love-letter she had ever had;—the first letter she had ever received from any man except her father and brother,—the first, almost, that had ever been written to her by any other than her own old special friends.

The words of it were very strange to her ear. He had told her when he left her that he would write to her, and therefore she had looked forward to the event which had now come; but she had thought that it would be much more distant,—and she had tried to make herself believe that when it did come it would be very different from this letter which she now possessed. "He will tell me that he has altered his mind. He ought to do so. It is not proper that he should still think of me when we are in such disgrace." But now the letter had come, and she acknowledged the truth of his saying that written words were clearer in their expression than those simply spoken. "Not that I could ever forget a syllable that he said." Yet, as she held the letter in her hand she felt that it was a possession. It was a thing at which she could look in coming years, when he and she might be far apart,—a thing at which she could look with pride in remembering that he had thought her worthy of it.

Neither on that day nor on the next did she think of her answer, nor on the third nor the fourth with any steady thinking. She knew that an answer would have to be written, and she felt that the sooner it was written the easier might be the writing; but she felt also that it should not be written too quickly. A week should first elapse, she thought, and therefore a week was allowed to elapse, and then the day for writing her answer came. She had spoken no word about it either to Mrs. Dale or to Lily. She had longed to do so, but had feared. Even though she should speak to Lily she could not be led by Lily's advice. Her letter, whatever it might be, must be her own letter. She would admit of no dictation. She must say her own say, let her say it ever so badly. As to the manner of saying it, Lily's aid would have been invaluable; but she feared that she could not secure that aid without compromising her own power of action,—her own individuality, and therefore she said no word about the letter either to Lily or to Lily's mother.

On a certain morning she fixed herself at her desk to write her letter She had known that the task would be difficult, but she had little known how difficult it would be. On that day of her first attempt she did not get it written at all. How was she to begin? He had called her "Dearest Grace;" and this mode of beginning seemed as easy as it was sweet. "It is very easy for a gentleman," she said to herself, "because he may say just what he pleases." She wrote the words,

"Dearest Henry," on a scrap of paper, and immediately tore it into fragments as though she were ashamed of having written them. She knew that she would not dare to send away a letter beginning with such words. She would not even have dared to let such words in her own handwriting remain within the recesses of her own little desk. "Dear Major Grantly," she began at length. It seemed to her to be very ugly, but after much consideration she believed it to be correct. On the second day the letter was written as follows;—

"Allington, Thursday.

"My dear Major Grantly,—I do not know how I ought to answer your kind letter, but I must tell you that I am very much flattered by your great goodness to me. I cannot understand why you should think so much of me, but I suppose it is because you have felt for all our misfortunes. I will not say anything about what might have happened, if it had not been for papa's sorrow and disgrace; and as far as I can help it, I will not think of it; but I am sure that I ought not to think about loving any one, that is, in the way you mean, while we are in such trouble at home. I should not dare to meet any of your great friends, knowing that I had brought nothing with me but disgrace. And I should feel that I was doing an injury to *dear* Edith, which would be worse to me than anything.

"Pray believe that I am quite in earnest about this. I know that a gentleman ought not to marry any girl to do himself and his family an injury by it; and I know that if I were to make such a marriage I should be unhappy ever afterwards, even though I loved the man ever so dearly, with all my heart." These last words she had underscored at first, but the doing so had been the unconscious expression of her own affection, and had been done with no desire on her part to convey that expression to him. But on reading the words she discovered their latent meaning, and wrote it all again.

"Therefore I know that it will be best that I should wish you good-bye, and I do so, thanking you again and again for your goodness to me.

"Believe me to be,

"Yours very sincerely,

"Grace Crawley."

The letter when it was written was hateful to her; but she had tried her hand at it again and again, and had found that she could do nothing better. There was much in his letter that she had not attempted to answer. He had implored her to tell him whether or no she did in truth love him. Of course she loved him. He knew that well enough. Why should she answer any such question? There was a way of answering it indeed which might serve her turn,—or rather serve his, of which she was thinking more than of her own. She might say that she did not love him. It would be a lie, and he would know that it would be a lie. But still it might serve the turn. She did not like the idea of writing such a lie as that, but nevertheless she considered the matter. It would be very wicked; but still, if it would serve the turn, might it not be well to write it? But at last she reflected that, after all, the doing of the thing was in her own hands. She could refuse to marry this man without burdening her conscience with any lie about it. It only required that she should be firm. She abstained, therefore, from the falsehood, and left her lover's question unanswered. So she put up her letter and directed it, and carried it herself to the village post-office.

On the day after this she got the second letter, and that she showed immediately to Mrs. Dale. It was from her mother, and was written to tell her that her father was seriously ill. "He went up to London to see a lawyer about this weary work of the trial," said Mrs. Crawley. "The fatigue was very great, and on the next day he was so weak that he could not leave his bed. Dr. Turner, who has been very kind, says that we need not frighten ourselves, but he thinks it must be some time before he can leave the house. He has a low fever on him, and wants nourishment. His mind has wandered once or twice, and he has asked for you, and I think it will be best, love, that you should come home. I know you will not mind it when I say that I think he would like to have you here. Dr. Turner says that the illness is chiefly owing to his not having proper food."

Of course she would go at once. "Dear Mrs. Dale," she said, "I must go home. Can you send me to the station?" Then Mrs. Dale read the letter. Of course they would send her. Would she go on that day, or on the next? Might it not be better to write first, and say that she was going? But Grace would go at once. "I know it will be a comfort to mamma; and I know that he is worse than mamma

says." Of course there was no more to be said, and she was despatched to the station. Before she went Mrs. Dale asked after her purse. "If there is any trouble about money,—for your journey, or anything, you will not scruple to come to me as to an old friend." But Grace assured her that there was no trouble about money—for her journey. Then Lily took her aside and produced two clean new five-pound notes. "Grace, dear, you won't be ill-natured. You know I have a little fortune of my own. You know I can give them without missing them." Grace threw herself into her friend's arms and wept, but would have none of her money. "Buy a present from me for your mother,—whom I love though I do not know her." "I will give her your love," Grace said, "but nothing else." And then she went.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HOOK COURT.

Mr. Dobbs Broughton and Mr. Musselboro were sitting together on a certain morning at their office in the City, discussing the affairs of their joint business. The City office was a very poor place indeed, in comparison with the fine house which Mr. Dobbs occupied at the West End; but then City offices are poor places, and there are certain City occupations which seem to enjoy the greater credit the poorer are the material circumstances by which they are surrounded. Turning out of a lane which turns out of Lombard Street, there is a desolate, forlorn-looking, dark alley, which is called Hook Court. The entrance to this alley is beneath the first floor of one of the houses in the lane, and in passing under this covered way the visitor to the place finds himself in a small paved square court, at the two further corners of which there are two open doors; for in Hook Court there are only two houses. There is No. 1, Hook Court, and No 2, Hook Court. The entire premises

indicated by No. 1, are occupied by a firm of wine and spirit merchants, in connection with whose trade one side and two angles of the court are always lumbered with crates, hampers, and wooden cases. And nearly in the middle of the court, though somewhat more to the wine-merchants' side than to the other, there is always gaping open a trap-door, leading down to vaults below; and over the trap there is a great board with a bright advertisement in very large letters:—

BURTON AND BANGLES.

HIMALAYA WINES,

22s. 6d. per dozen.

And this notice is so bright and so large, and the trap-door is so conspicuous in the court, that no visitor, even to No. 2, ever afterwards can quite divest his memory of those names, Burton and Bangles, Himalaya wines. It may therefore be acknowledged that Burton and Bangles have achieved their object in putting up the notice. The house No. 2, small as it seems to be, standing in the jamb of a corner, is divided among different occupiers, whose names are painted in small letters upon the very dirty posts of the doorway. Nothing can be more remarkable than the contrast between Burton and Bangles and these other City gentlemen in the method taken by them in declaring their presence to visitors in the court. The names of Dobbs Broughton and of A. Musselboro, — the Christian name of Mr. Musselboro was Augustus,—were on one of those dirty posts, not joined together by any visible "and," so as to declare boldly that they were partners; but in close vicinity,—showing at least that the two gentlemen would be found in apartments very near to each other. And on the first-floor of this house Dobbs Broughton and his friend did occupy three rooms,—or rather two rooms and a closet—between them. The larger and front room was tenanted by an old clerk, who sat within a rail in one corner of it. And there was a broad, short counter which jutted out from the wall into the middle of the room, intended for the use of such of the public as might come to transact miscellaneous business with Dobbs Broughton or Augustus Musselboro. But any one accustomed to the look of offices might have seen with half an eye that very little business was ever done on that counter. Behind this large room was a smaller one, belonging to Dobbs Broughton, in the furnishing and arrangement

of which some regard had been paid to comfort. The room was carpeted, and there was a sofa in it, though a very old one, and two arm-chairs and a mahogany office-table, and a cellaret, which was generally well supplied with wine which Dobbs Broughton did not get out of the vaults of his neighbours, Burton and Bangles. Behind this, again, but with a separate entrance from the passage, was the closet; and this closet was specially devoted to the use of Mr. Musselboro. Closet as it was,—or cupboard as it might almost have been called,—it contained a table and two chairs; and it had a window of its own, which opened out upon a blank wall which was distant from it not above four feet. As the house to which this wall belonged was four storeys high, it would sometimes happen that Mr. Musselboro's cupboard was rather dark. But this mattered the less as in these days Mr. Musselboro seldom used it. Mr. Musselboro, who was very constant at his place of business,—much more constant than his friend, Dobbs Broughton,—was generally to be found in his friend's room. Only on some special occasions, on which it was thought expedient that the commercial world should be made to understand that Mr. Augustus Musselboro had an individual existence of his own, did that gentleman really seat himself in the dark closet. Mr. Dobbs Broughton, had he been asked what was his trade, would have said that he was a stockbroker; and he would have answered truly, for he was a stockbroker. A man may be a stockbroker though he never sells any stock; as he may be a barrister though he has no practice at the bar. I do not say that Mr. Broughton never sold any stock; but the buying and selling of stock for other people was certainly not his chief business. And had Mr. Musselboro been asked what was his trade, he would have probably given an evasive answer. At any rate in the City, and among people who understood City matters, he would not have said that he was a stockbroker. Both Mr. Broughton and Mr. Musselboro bought and sold a good deal, but it was chiefly on account. The shares which were bought and sold very generally did not pass from hand to hand; but the difference in the price of the shares did do so. And then they had another little business between them. They lent money on interest. And in this business there was a third partner, whose name did not appear on the dirty door-post. That third partner was Mrs. Van Siever, the mother of Clara Van Siever whom Mr. Conway Dalrymple intended to portray as Jael driving a nail into Sisera's head.

On a certain morning Mr. Broughton and Mr. Musselboro were sitting together in the office which has been described. They were in Mr. Broughton's room, and occupied each an arm-chair on the different sides of the fire. Mr. Musselboro was sitting close to the table, on which a ledger was open before him, and he had a pen and ink before him, as though he had been at work. Dobbs Broughton had a small betting-book in his hand, and was seated with his feet up against the side of the fireplace. Both men wore their hats, and the aspect of the room was not the aspect of a place of business. They had been silent for some minutes when Broughton took his cigar-case out of his pocket, and nibbled off the end of a cigar, preparatory to lighting it.

"You had better not smoke here this morning, Dobbs," said Musselboro.

"Why shouldn't I smoke in my own room?"

"Because she'll be here just now."

"What do I care? If you think I'm going to be afraid of Mother Van, you're mistaken. Let come what may, I'm not going to live under her thumb." So he lighted his cigar.

"All right," said Musselboro, and he took up his pen and went to work at his book.

"What is she coming here for this morning?" asked Broughton.

"To look after her money. What should she come for?"

"She gets her interest. I don't suppose there's better paid money in the City."

"She hasn't got what was coming to her at Christmas yet."

"And this is February. What would she have? She had better put her dirty money into the three per cents., if she is frightened at having to wait a week or two."

"Can she have it to-day?"

"What, the whole of it? Of course she can't. You know that as well as I do. She can have four hundred pounds if she wants it. But seeing all she gets out of the concern she has no right to press for it in that way. She is the —— old usurer I ever came across in my life."

"Of course she likes her money."

"Likes her money! By George, she does; her own and anybody else's that she can get hold of. For a downright leech, recommend me always to a woman. When a woman does go in for it, she is much more thorough than any man." Then Broughton turned over the little

pages of his book, and Musselboro pondered over the big pages of his book, and there was silence for a quarter of an hour.

"There's something about nine hundred and fifteen pounds due to her," said Musselboro.

"I daresay there is."

"It would be a very good thing to let her have it if you've got it. The whole of it this morning, I mean."

"If! yes, if!" said Broughton.

"I know there's more than that at the bank."

"And I'm to draw out every shilling that there is! I'll see Mother Van—further first. She can have 500*l.* if she likes it,—and the rest in a fortnight. Or she can have my note-of-hand for it all at fourteen days."

"She won't like that at all," said Musselboro.

"Then she must lump it. I'm not going to bother myself about her. I've pretty nearly as much money in it as she has, and we're in a boat together. If she comes here bothering, you'd better tell so."

"You'll see her yourself?"

"Not unless she comes within the next ten minutes. I must go down to the court. I said I'd be there by twelve. I've got somebody I want to see."

"I'd stay if I were you."

"Why should I stay for her? If she thinks that I'm going to make myself her clerk, she's mistaken. It may be all very well for you, Mussy, but it won't do for me. I'm not dependent on her, and I don't want to marry her daughter."

"It will simply end in her demanding to have her money back again."

"And how will she get it?" said Dobbs Broughton. "I haven't a doubt in life but she'd take it to-morrow if she could put her hands upon it. And then, after a bit, when she began to find that she didn't like four per cent., she'd bring it back again. But nobody can do business after such a fashion as that. For the last three years she's drawn close upon two thousand a year for less than eighteen thousand pounds. When a woman wants to do that, she can't have her money in her pocket every Monday morning."

"But you've done better than that yourself, Dobbs."

"Of course I have. And who has made the connection? and who

has done the work? I suppose she doesn't think that I'm to have all the sweat and that she is to have all the profit."

"If you talk of work, Dobbs, it is I that have done the most of it." This Mr. Musselboro said in a very serious voice, and with a look of much reproach.

"And you've been paid for what you've done. Come, Mussy, you'd better not turn against me. You'll never get your change out of that. Even if you marry the daughter, that won't give you the mother's money. She'll stick to every shilling of it till she dies; and she'd take it with her then, if she knew how." Having said this, he got up from his chair, put his little book into his pocket, and walked out of the office. He pushed his way across the court, which was more than ordinarily crowded with the implements of Burton and Bangles' trade, and as he passed under the covered way he encountered at the entrance an old woman getting out of a cab. The old woman was, of course, Mother Van, as her partner, Mr. Dobbs Broughton, irreverently called her. "Mrs. Van Siever, how d'ye do? Let me give you a hand. Fare from South Kensington? I always give the fellows three shillings."

"You don't mean to tell me it's six miles?" And she tendered a florin to the man.

"Can't take that, ma'am," said the cabman.

"Can't take it! But you must take it. Broughton, just get a policeman, will you?" Dobbs Broughton satisfied the driver out of his own pocket, and the cab was driven away. "What did you give him?" said Mrs. Van Siever.

"Just another sixpence. There never is a policeman anywhere about here."

"It'll be out of your own pocket, then," said Mrs. Van. "But you're not going away?"

"I must be at Capel Court by half-past twelve;—I must, indeed. If it wasn't real business, I'd stay."

"I told Musselboro I should be here."

"He's up there, and he knows all about the business just as well as I do. When I found that I couldn't stay for you, I went through the account with him, and it's all settled. Good morning. I'll see you at the West End in a day or two." Then he made his way out into Lombard Street, and Mrs. Van Siever picked her steps across the yard,

and mounted the stairs, and made her way into the room in which Mr. Musselboro was sitting.

"Somebody's been smoking, Gus," she said, almost as soon as she had entered the room.

"That's nothing new here," he replied, as he got up from his chair.

"There's no good being done when men sit and smoke over their work. Is it you, or he, or both of you?"

"Well;—it was Broughton was smoking just now. I don't smoke of a morning myself."

"What made him get up and run away when I came?"

"How can I tell, Mrs. Van Siever?" said Musselboro laughing. "If he did run away when you came, I suppose it was because he didn't want to see you."

"And why shouldn't he want to see me? Gus, I expect the truth from you. How are things going on here?" To this question Mr. Musselboro made no immediate answer; but tilted himself back in his chair and took his hat off, and put his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and looking his patroness full in the face. "Gus," she said again, "I do expect the truth from you. How are things going on here?"

"There'd be a good business,—if he'd only keep things together."

"But he's idle. Isn't he idle?"

"Confoundedly idle," said Musselboro.

"And he drinks;—don't he drink in the day?"

"Like the mischief,—some days. But that isn't the worst of it."

"And what is the worst of it?"

"Newmarket;—that's the rock he's going to pieces on."

"You don't mean to say he takes the money out of the business for that?" And Mrs. Van Siever's face, as she asked the question, expressed almost a tragic horror. "If I thought that I wouldn't give him an hour's mercy."

"When a man bets he doesn't well know what money he uses. I can't say that he takes money that is not his own. Situated as I am, I don't know what is his own and what isn't. If your money was in my name I could keep a hand on it;—but as it is not I can do nothing. I can see that what is put out is put out fairly well; and when I think of it, Mrs. Van Siever, it is quite wonderful that we've lost so little.

It has been next to nothing. That has been my doing;—and that's about all that I can do."

"You must know whether he has used my money for his own purposes or not."

"If you ask me, I think he has," said Mr. Musselboro.

"Then I'll go into it, and I'll find it out, and if it is so, as sure as my name's Van Siever, I'll sew him up." Having uttered which terrible threat, the old woman drew a chair to the table and seated herself fairly down, as though she were determined to go through all the books of the office before she quitted that room. Mrs. Van Siever in her present habiliments was not a thing so terrible to look at as she had been in her wiggeries at Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's dinner-table. Her curls were laid aside altogether, and she wore simply a front beneath her close bonnet,—and a very old front, too, which was not loudly offensive because it told no lies. Her eyes were as bright, and her little wizen face was as sharp, as ever; but the wizen face and the bright eyes were not so much amiss as seen together with the old dark brown silk dress which she now wore, as they had been with the wiggeries and the evening finery. Even now, in her morning costume, in her work-a-day business dress, as we may call it, she looked to be very old,—so old that nobody could guess her age. People attempting to guess would say that she must be at least over eighty. And yet she was wiry, and strong, and nimble. It was not because she was feeble that she was thought to be so old. They who so judged of her were led to their opinion by the extreme thinness of her face, and by the brightness of her eyes, joined to the depth of the hollows in which they lay, and the red margin by which they were surrounded. It was not really the fact that Mrs. Van Siever was so very aged, for she had still some years to live before she would reach eighty, but that she was such a weird old woman, so small, so ghastly, and so ugly! "I'll sew him up, if he's been robbing me," she said. "I will, indeed." And she stretched out her hand to grab at the ledger which Musselboro had been using.

"You won't understand anything from that," said he, pushing the book over to her.

"You can explain it to me."

"That's all straight sailing, that is."

"And where does he keep the figures that ain't straight sailing? That's the book I want to see."

"There is no such book."

"Look here, Gus,—if I find you deceiving me I'll throw you overboard as sure as I'm a living woman. I will indeed. I'll have no mercy. I've stuck to you and made a man of you, and I expect you to stick to me."

"Not much of a man," said Musselboro, with a touch of scorn in his voice.

"You've never had a shilling yet but what I gave you."

"Yes; I have. I've had what I've worked for,—and worked confounded hard too."

"Look here, Musselboro: if you're going to throw me over, just tell me so, and let us begin fair."

"I'm not going to throw you over. I've always been on the square with you. Why don't you trust me out and out, and then I could do a deal better for you. You ask me now about your money. I don't know about your money, Mrs. Van Siever. How am I to know anything about your money, Mrs. Van Siever? You don't give me any power of keeping a hand upon Dobbs Broughton. I suppose you have security from Dobbs Broughton, but I don't know what security you have, Mrs. Van Siever. He owes you now 915*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* on last year's account!"

"Why doesn't he give me a cheque for the money?"

"He says he can't spare it. You may have 500*l.*, and the rest when he can give it you. Or he'll give you his note-of-hand at fourteen days for the whole."

"Bother his note-of-hand. Why should I take his note-of-hand?"

"Do as you like, Mrs. Van Siever."

"It's the interest on my own money. Why don't he give it me? I suppose he has had it."

"You must ask him that, Mrs. Van Siever. You're in partnership with him, and he can tell you. Nobody else knows anything about it. If you were in partnership with me, then of course I could tell you. But you're not. You've never trusted me, Mrs. Van Siever."

The lady remained there closeted with Mr. Musselboro for an hour after that, and did, I think, at length learn something more as to the details of her partner's business, than her faithful servant Mr. Mussel-

boro had at first found himself able to give to her. And at last they came to friendly and confidential terms, in the midst of which the personal welfare of Mr. Dobbs Broughton was, I fear, somewhat forgotten. Not that Mr. Musselboro palpably and plainly threw his friend overboard. He took his friend's part,—alleging excuses for him, and pleading some facts. "Of course, you know, a man like that is fond of pleasure, Mrs. Van Siever. He's been at it more or less all his life. I don't suppose he ever missed a Derby, or an Oaks, or the cup at Ascot, or the Goodwood in his life."

"He'll have to miss them before long, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Van Siever.

"And as to not cashing up, you must remember, Mrs. Van Siever, that ten per cent. won't come in quite as regularly as four or five. When you go for high interest, there must be hitches here and there. There must, indeed, Mrs. Van Siever."

"I know all about it," said Mrs. Van Siever. "If he gave it me as soon as he got it himself, I shouldn't complain. Never mind. He's only got to give me my little bit of money out of the business, and then he and I will be all square. You come and see Clara this evening, Gus."

Then Mr. Musselboro put Mrs. Van Siever into another cab, and went out upon 'Change,—hanging about the Bank, and standing in Threadneedle Street, talking to other men just like himself. When he saw Dobbs Broughton he told that gentleman that Mrs. Van Siever had been in her tantrums, but that he had managed to pacify her before she left Hook Court. "I'm to take her the cheque for the five hundred to-night," he said.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JAEL.

On the first of March Conway Dalrymple's easel was put up in Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's boudoir upstairs, the canvas was placed upon it on which the outlines of Jael and Sisera had been already drawn, and Mrs. Broughton and Clara Van Siever and Conway Dalrymple were assembled with the view of steady art-work. But before we see how they began their work together we will go back for a moment to John Eames on his return to his London lodgings. The first thing every man does when he returns after an absence is to look at his letters, and John Eames looked at his. There were not very many. There was a note marked immediate, from Sir Raffle Buffle, in which Sir R. had scrawled in four lines a notification that he should be driven to an extremity of inconvenience if Eames were not at his post at half-past nine on the following morning. "I think I see myself there at that hour," said John. There was a notification of a house dinner, which he was asked to join, at his club, and a card for an evening gathering at Lady Glencora Palliser's,—procured for him by his friend Conway,—and an invitation to dinner at the house of his uncle, Mr. Toogood; and there was a scented note in the handwriting of a lady which he did not recognize. "My nearest and dearest friend, M. D. M.," he said, as he opened the note and looked at the signature. Then he read the letter, which was from Miss Demolines.

"My dear Mr. Eames,

"Pray come to me at once. I know that you are to be back to-morrow. Do not lose an hour if you can help it. I shall be at home at half-past five. I fear what you know of has been begun. But it certainly shall not go on. In one way or other it must be prevented. I won't say another word till I see you, but pray come at once.

"Yours always,

"*Thursday.*" M. D. M."

"Poor mamma isn't very well, so you had better ask for me."

"Beautiful!" said Johnny, as he read the note. "There's nothing I like so much as a mystery,—especially if it's about nothing. I wonder why she is so desperately anxious that the picture should not be painted. I'd ask Dalrymple, only I should spoil the mystery." Then he sat himself down, and began to think of Lily. There could be no treason to Lily in his amusing himself with the freaks of such a woman as Miss Demolines.

At eleven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of March,—the day following that on which Miss Demolines had written her note,—the easel was put up and the canvas was placed on it in Mrs. Broughton's room. Mrs. Broughton and Clara were both there, and when they had seen the outlines as far as it had been drawn, they proceeded to make arrangements for their future operations. The period of work was to begin always at eleven, and was to be continued for an hour and a half or for two hours on the days on which they met. I fear that there was a little improper scheming in this against the two persons whom the ladies were bound to obey. Mr. Dobbs Broughton invariably left his house soon after ten in the morning. It would sometimes happen, though not frequently, that he returned home early in the day,—at four, perhaps, or even before that; and should he chance to do so while the picture was going on, he would catch them at their work if the work were postponed till after luncheon. And then again, Mrs. Van Siever would often go out in the morning, and when she did so, would always go without her daughter. On such occasions she went into the city, or to other resorts of business, at which, in some manner quite unintelligible to her daughter, she looked after her money. But when she did not go out in the morning, she did go out in the afternoon, and she would then require her daughter's company. There was some place to which she always went of a Friday morning, and at which she stayed for two or three hours. Friday therefore was a fitting day on which to begin the work at Mrs. Broughton's house. All this was explained between the three conspirators. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton declared that if she entertained the slightest idea that her husband would object to the painting of the picture in her room, nothing on earth would induce her to lend her countenance to it; but yet it might be well not to tell him just at first,—perhaps not till the sittings were over,—perhaps not till the picture was finished; as, otherwise, tidings of the picture might get round to ears

which were not intended to hear it. "Poor dear Dobbs is so careless with a secret."

Miss Van Siever explained her motives in a very different way. "I know mamma would not let me do it if she knew it, and therefore I shall not tell her."

"My dear Clara," said Mrs. Broughton with a smile, "you are so outspoken!"

"And why not?" said Miss Van Siever. "I am old enough to judge for myself. If mamma does not want to be deceived, she ought not to treat me like a child. Of course she'll find it out sooner or later; but I don't care about that."

Conway Dalrymple said nothing as the two ladies were thus excusing themselves.

"How delightful it must be not to have a master," said Mrs. Broughton, addressing him.

"But then a man has to work for his own bread," said he. "I suppose it comes about equal in the long run."

Very little drawing or painting was done on that day. In the first place it was necessary that the question of costume should be settled, and both Mrs. Broughton and the artist had much to say on the subject. It was considered proper that Jael should be dressed as a Jewess, and there came to be much question how Jewesses dressed themselves in those early days. Mrs. Broughton had prepared her jewels and raiment of many colours, but the painter declared that the wife of Heber the Kenite would have no jewels. But when Mrs. Broughton discovered from her Bible that Heber had been connected by family ties with Moses, she was more than ever sure that Heber's wife would have in her tent much of the spoilings of the Egyptians. And when Clara Van Siever suggested that at any rate she would not have worn them in a time of confusion when soldiers were loose, flying about the country, Mrs. Broughton was quite confident that she would have put them on before she invited the captain of the enemy's host into her tent. The artist at last took the matter into his own hand by declaring that Miss Van Siever would sit the subject much better without jewels, and therefore all Mrs. Broughton's gewgaws were put back into their boxes. And then on four different times the two ladies had to retire into Mrs. Broughton's room in order that Jael might be arrayed in various costumes,—and in each costume she had

to kneel down, taking the hammer in her hand and holding the pointed stick which had been prepared to do duty as the nail, upon the forehead of a dummy Sisera. At last it was decided that her raiment should be altogether white, and that she should wear, twisted round her head and falling over her shoulder, a Roman silk scarf of various colours. "Where Jael could have gotten it I don't know," said Clara. "You may be sure that there were lots of such things among the Egyptians," said Mrs. Broughton, "and that Moses brought away all the best for his own family."

"And who is to be Sisera?" asked Mrs. Broughton in one of the pauses in their work.

"I'm thinking of asking my friend John Eames to sit."

"Of course we cannot sit together," said Miss Van Siever.

"There's no reason why you should," said Dalrymple. "I can do the second figure in my own room." Then there was a bargain made that Sisera should not be a portrait. "It would never do," said Mrs. Broughton, shaking her head very gravely.

Though there was really very little done to the picture on that day, the work was commenced; and Mrs. Broughton, who had at first objected strongly to the idea, and who had said twenty times that it was quite out of the question that it should be done in her house, became very eager in her delight about it. Nobody should know anything of the picture till it should be exhibited. That would be best. And it should be the picture of the year! She was a little heart-broken when Dalrymple assured her that it could not possibly be finished for exhibition in that May; but she came to again when he declared that he meant to put out all his strength upon it. "There will be five or six months' work in it," he said. "Will there, indeed? And how much work was there in 'The Graces?'" "The Graces," as will perhaps be remembered, was the triple portrait of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton herself. This question the artist did not answer with absolute accuracy, but contented himself with declaring that with such a model as Mrs. Broughton the picture had been comparatively easy.

Mrs. Broughton, having no doubt that ultimate object of which she had spoken to her friend Conway steadily in view, took occasion before the sitting was over to leave the room, so that the artist might have an opportunity of speaking a word in private to his model,—if

he had any such word to speak. And Mrs. Broughton, as she did this, felt that she was doing her duty as a wife, a friend, and a Christian. She was doing her duty as a wife, because she was giving the clearest proof in the world,—the clearest at any rate to herself,—that the intimacy between herself and her friend Conway had in it nothing that was improper. And she was doing her duty as a friend, because Clara Van Siever, with her large expectations, would be an eligible wife. And she was doing her duty as a Christian, because the whole thing was intended to be moral. Miss Demolines had declared that her friend Maria Clutterbuck,—as Miss Demolines delighted to call Mrs. Broughton, in memory of dear old innocent days,—had high principles; and the reader will see that she was justified in her declaration. "It will be better so," said Mrs. Broughton, as she sat upon her bed and wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. "Yes; it will be better so. There is a pang. Of course there's a pang. But it will be better so." Acting upon this high principle, she allowed Conway Dalrymple five minutes to say what he had to say to Clara Van Siever. Then she allowed herself to indulge in some very savage feelings in reference to her husband,—accusing her husband in her thoughts of great cruelty,—nay, of brutality, because of certain sharp words that he had said as to Conway Dalrymple. "But of course he can't understand," said Mrs. Broughton to herself. "How is it to be expected that he should understand?"

But she allowed her friend on this occasion only five minutes, thinking probably that so much might suffice. A woman, when she is jealous, is apt to attribute to the other woman with whom her jealousy is concerned, both weakness and timidity, and to the man both audacity and strength. A woman who has herself taken perhaps twelve months in the winning, will think that another woman is to be won in five minutes. It is not to be supposed that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had ever been won by any one except by Mr. Dobbs Broughton. At least, let it not be supposed that she had ever acknowledged a spark of love for Conway Dalrymple. But nevertheless there was enough of jealousy in her present mood to make her think poorly of Miss Van Siever's capacity for standing a siege against the artist's eloquence. Otherwise, having left the two together with the object which she had acknowledged to herself, she would hardly have returned to them after so very short an interval.

"I hope you won't dislike the trouble of all this?" said Dalrymple to his model, as soon as Mrs. Broughton was gone.

"I cannot say that I like it very much," said Miss Van Siever.

"I'm afraid it will be a bore;—but I hope you'll go through with it."

"I shall if I am not prevented," said Miss Van Siever. "When I've said that I'll do a thing I like to do it."

There was a pause in the conversation which took up a considerable portion of the five minutes. Miss Van Siever was not holding her nail during these moments, but was sitting in a common-place way on her chair, while Dalrymple was scraping his palette. "I wonder what it was that first induced you to sit?" said he.

"Oh, I don't know. I took a fancy for it."

"I'm very glad you did take the fancy. You'll make an excellent model. If you won't mind posing again for a few minutes—I will not weary you to-day. Your right arm a little more forward."

"But I should tumble down."

"Not if you lean well on to the nail."

"But that would have woken Sisera before she had struck a blow."

"Never mind that. Let us try it." Then Mrs. Broughton returned, with that pleasant feeling in her bosom of having done her duty as a wife, a friend, and a Christian. "Mrs. Broughton," continued the painter, "just steady Miss Van Siever's shoulder with your hand; and now bring the arm and the elbow a little more forward."

"But Jael did not have a friend to help her in that way," said Miss Van Siever.

At the end of an hour and a half the two ladies retired, and Jael disrobed herself, and Miss Van Siever put on her customary raiment. It was agreed among them that they had commenced their work auspiciously, and that they would meet again on the following Monday. The artist begged to be allowed an hour to go on with his work in Mrs. Broughton's room, and the hour was conceded to him. It was understood that he could not take the canvas backwards and forwards with him to his own house, and he pointed out that no progress whatever could be made, unless he were occasionally allowed some such grace as this. Mrs. Broughton doubted and hesitated, made difficulties, and lifted up her hands in despair. "It is easy for you to say, Why not? but I know very well why not." But at last

she gave way. "Honi soit qui mal y pense," she said; "that must be my protection." So she followed Miss Van Siever downstairs, leaving Mr. Dalrymple in possession of her boudoir. "I shall give you just one hour," she said, "and then I shall come and turn you out." So she went down, and, as Miss Van Siever would not stay to lunch with her, she ate her lunch by herself, sending a glass of sherry and a biscuit up to the poor painter at his work.

Exactly at the end of the hour she returned to him. "Now, Conway, you must go," she said.

"But why in such a hurry?"

"Because I say that it must be so. When I say so, pray let that be sufficient." But still Dalrymple went on working. "Conway," she said, "how can you treat me with so much disdain?"

"Disdain, Mrs. Broughton!"

"Yes, disdain. Have I not begged you to understand that I cannot allow you to remain here, and yet you pay no attention to my wishes."

"I have done now;" and he began to put his brushes and paints together. "I suppose all these things may remain here?"

"Yes; they may remain. They must do so, of course. There; if you will put the easel in the corner, with the canvas behind it, they will not be seen if he should chance to come into the room."

"He would not be angry, I suppose, if he saw them?"

"There is no knowing. Men are so unreasonable. All men are, I think. All those are whom I have had the fortune to know. Women generally say that men are selfish. I do not complain so much that they are selfish as that they are thoughtless. They are headstrong, and do not look forward to results. Now you,—I do not think you would willingly do me an injury?"

"I do not think I would."

"I am sure you would not; but yet you would forget to save me from one."

"What injury?"

"Oh, never mind. I am not thinking of anything in particular. From myself, for instance. But we will not talk about that. That way madness lies. Tell me, Conway;—what do you think of Clara Van Siever?"

"She is very handsome, certainly."

"And clever?"

"Decidedly clever. I should think she has a temper of her own."

"What woman is there worth a straw that has not? If Clara Van Siever were ill-used, she would resent it. I do not doubt that for a moment. I should not like to be the man who would do it."

"Nor I, either," said Conway.

"But there is plenty of feminine softness in that character, if she were treated with love and kindness. Conway, if you will take my advice you will ask Clara Van Siever to be your wife. But perhaps you have already?"

"Who; I?"

"Yes; you."

'I have not done it yet, certainly, Mrs. Broughton."

"And why should you not do it?"

"There are two or three reasons;—but perhaps none of any great importance. Do you know of none, Mrs. Broughton?"

"I know of none," said Mrs. Broughton, in a very serious,—in almost a tragic tone;—"of none that should weigh for a moment. As far as I am concerned, nothing would give me more pleasure."

"That is so kind of you!"

"I mean to be kind. I do, indeed, Conway. I know it will be better for you that you should be settled,—very much better. And it will be better for me. I do not mind admitting that; though in saying so I trust greatly to your generosity to interpret my words properly."

"I shall not flatter myself, if you mean that."

"There is no question of flattery, Conway. The question is simply of truth and prudence. Do you not know that it would be better that you should be married?"

"Not unless a certain gentleman were to die first," said Conway Dalrymple, as he deposited the last of his painting paraphernalia in the recess which had been prepared for them by Mrs. Broughton.

"Conway, how can you speak in that wicked, wicked way!"

"I can assure you I do not wish the gentleman in question the slightest harm in the world. If his welfare depended on me, he should be as safe as the Bank of England."

"And you will not take my advice?"

"What advice?"

"About Clara?"

"Mrs. Broughton, matrimony is a very important thing."

"Indeed, it is;—oh, who can say, how important! There was a time, Conway, when I thought you had given your heart to Madalina Demolines."

"Heaven forbid!"

"And I grieved, because I thought that she was not worthy of you."

"There was never anything in that, Mrs. Broughton."

"She thought that there was. At any rate, she said so. I know that for certain. She told me so herself. But let that pass. Clara Van Siever is in every respect very different from Madalina. Clara, I think, is worthy of you. And, Conway,—of course it is not for me to dictate to you; but this I must tell you——" Then she paused, as though she did not know how to finish her sentence.

"What must you tell me?"

"I will tell you nothing more. If you cannot understand what I have said, you must be more dull of comprehension than I believe you to be. Now go. Why are you not gone this half-hour?"

"How could I go while you were giving me all this good advice?"

"I have not asked you to stay. Go now, at any rate. And, remember, Conway, if this picture is to go on, I will not have you remaining here after the work is done. Will you remember that?" And she held him by the hand while he declared that he would remember it.

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was no more in love with Conway Dalrymple than she was in love with King Charles on horse-back at Charing Cross. And, over and beyond the protection which came to her in the course of nature from unimpassioned feelings in this special phase of her life,—and indeed, I may say, in every phase of her life,—it must be acknowledged on her behalf that she did enjoy that protection which comes from what we call principle,—though the principle was not perhaps very high of its kind. Madalina Demolines had been right when she talked of her friend Maria's principles. Dobbs Broughton had been so far lucky in that jump in the dark which he made in taking a wife to himself, that he had not fallen upon a really vicious woman, or upon a woman of strong feeling. If it had come to be the lot of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton to have six hours' work to do every day of her life, I think that the work would have been done badly, but

that it would have kept her free from all danger. As it was she had nothing to do. She had no child. She was not given to much reading. She could not sit with a needle in her hand all day. She had no aptitude for May meetings, or the excitement of charitable good works. Life with her was very dull, and she found no amusement within her reach so easy and so pleasant as the amusement of pretending to be in love. If all that she did and all that she said could only have been taken for its worth and for nothing more, by the different persons concerned, there was very little in it to flatter Mr. Dalrymple or to give cause for tribulation to Mr. Broughton. She probably cared but little for either of them. She was one of those women to whom it is not given by nature to care very much for anybody. But, of the two, she certainly cared the most for Mr. Dobbs Broughton,—because Mr. Dobbs Broughton belonged to her. As to leaving Mr. Dobbs Broughton's house, and putting herself into the hands of another man,—no Imogen of a wife was ever less likely to take a step so wicked, so dangerous, and so generally disagreeable to all the parties concerned.

But Conway Dalrymple,—though now and again he had got a side-glance at her true character with clear-seeing eyes,—did allow himself to be flattered and deceived. He knew that she was foolish and ignorant, and that she often talked wonderful nonsense. He knew that she was continually contradicting herself,—as when she would strenuously beg him to leave her, while she would continue to talk to him in a strain that prevented the possibility of his going. But, nevertheless, he was flattered, and he did believe that she loved him. As to his love for her,—he knew very well that it amounted to nothing. Now and again, perhaps twice a week, if he saw her as often, he would say something which would imply a declaration of affection. He felt that as much as that was expected from him, and that he ought not to hope to get off cheaper. And now that this little play was going on about Miss Van Siever, he did think that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was doing her very best to overcome an unfortunate attachment. It is so gratifying to a young man's feelings to suppose that another man's wife has conceived an unfortunate attachment for him! Conway Dalrymple ought not to have been fooled by such a woman; but he was fooled by her.

As he returned home to-day from Mrs. Broughton's house to his own lodgings he rambled out for a while into Kensington Gardens, and

thought of his position seriously. "I don't see why I should not marry her," he said to himself, thinking of course of Miss Van Siever. "If Maria is not in earnest it is not my fault. And it would be my wish that she should be in earnest. If I suppose her to be so, and take her at her word, she can have no right to quarrel with me. Poor Maria! at any rate it will be better for her, for no good can come of this kind of thing. And, by heavens, with a woman like that, of strong feelings, one never knows what may happen." And then he thought of the condition he would be in, if he were to find her some fine day in his own rooms, and if she were to tell him that she could not go home again, and that she meant to remain with him!

In the mean time Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had gone down into her own drawing-room, had tucked herself up on the sofa, and had fallen fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A NEW FLIRTATION.

JOHN EAMES sat at his office on the day after his return to London, and answered the various letters which he had found waiting for him at his lodgings on the previous evening. To Miss Demolines he had already written from his club,—a single line, which he considered to be appropriate to the mysterious necessities of the occasion. "I will be with you at a quarter to six to-morrow.—J. E. Just returned." There was not another word; and as he scrawled it at one of the club tables while two or three men were talking to him, he felt rather proud of his correspondence. "It was capital fun," he said; "and after all,"—the "all" on this occasion being Lily Dale, and the sadness of his disappointment at Allington,—"after all, let a fellow be ever so down in the mouth, a little amusement would do him good." And he reflected

further that the more a fellow be "down in the mouth," the more good the amusement would do him. He sent off his note, therefore, with some little inward rejoicing,—and a word or two also of spoken rejoicing. "What fun women are sometimes," he said to one of his friends,—a friend with whom he was very intimate, calling him always Fred, and slapping his back, but whom he never by any chance saw out of his club.

"What's up now, Johnny? Some good fortune?"

"Good fortune; no. I never have good fortunes of that kind. But I've got hold of a young woman,—or rather a young woman has got hold of me, who insists on having a mystery with me. In the mystery itself there is not the slightest interest. But the mysteriousness of it is charming. I have just written to her three words to settle an appointment for to-morrow. We don't sign our names lest the Postmaster-General should find out all about it."

"Is she pretty?"

"Well;—she isn't ugly. She has just enough of good looks to make the sort of thing pass off pleasantly. A mystery with a downright ugly young woman would be unpleasant."

After this fashion the note from Miss Demolines had been received and answered at once, but the other letters remained in his pocket till he reached his office on the following morning. Sir Raffle had begged him to be there at half-past nine. This he had sworn he would not do; but he did seat himself in his room at ten minutes before ten, finding of course the whole building untenanted at that early hour,—that unearthly hour, as Johnny called it himself. "I shouldn't wonder if he really is here this morning," Johnny said, as he entered the building, "just that he may have an opportunity of jumping on me." But Sir Raffle was not there, and then Johnny began to abuse Sir Raffle. "If ever I come here early to meet him again, because he says he means to be here himself, I hope I may be——blessed." On that especial morning it was twelve before Sir Raffle made his appearance, and Johnny avenged himself,—I regret to have to tell it,—by a fib. That Sir Raffle fibbed first, was no valid excuse whatever for Eames.

"I've been at it ever since six o'clock," said Sir Raffle.

"At what?" said Johnny

"Work, to be sure;—and very hard work too. I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks that he can call upon me to any

extent that he pleases;—just any extent that he pleases. He doesn't give me credit for a desire to have a single hour to myself."

"What would he do, Sir Raffle, if you were to get ill, or wear yourself out?"

"He knows I'm not one of the wearing-out sort. You got my note last night?"

"Yes; I got your note."

"I'm sorry that I troubled you; but I couldn't help it. I didn't expect to get a box full of papers at eleven o'clock last night."

"You didn't put me out, Sir Raffle; I happened to have business of my own which prevented the possibility of my being here early."

This was the way in which John Eames avenged himself. Sir Raffle turned his face upon his private secretary, and his face was very black. Johnny bore the gaze without dropping an eyelid. "I'm not going to stand it, and he may as well know that at once," Johnny said to one of his friends in the office afterwards. "If he ever wants anything really done, I'll do it;—though it should take me twelve hours at a stretch. But I'm not going to pretend to believe all the lies he tells me about the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If that is to be part of the private secretary's business, he had better get somebody else." But now Sir Raffle was very angry, and his countenance was full of wrath as he looked down upon his subordinate minister. "If I had come here, Mr. Eames, and had found you absent, I should have been very much annoyed,—very much annoyed indeed, after having written as I did."

"You would have found me absent at the hour you named. As I wasn't here then, I think it's only fair to say so."

"I'm afraid you begrudge your time to the service, Mr. Eames."

"I do begrudge it when the service doesn't want it."

"At your age, Mr. Eames, that's not for you to judge. If I had acted in that way when I was young I should never have filled the position I now hold. I always remembered in those days that as I was the hand and not the head, I was bound to hold myself in readiness whether work might be required from me or not."

"If I'm wanted as hand now, Sir Raffle, I'm ready."

"That's all very well;—but why were you not here at the hour I named?"

"Well, Sir Raffle, I cannot say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer

detained me;—but there was business. As I've been here for the last two hours, I am happy to think that in this instance the public service will not have suffered from my disobedience."

Sir Raffle was still standing with his hat on, and with his back to the fire, and his countenance was full of wrath. It was on his tongue to tell Johnny that he had better return to his former work in the outer office. He greatly wanted the comfort of a private secretary who would believe in him,—or at least pretend to believe in him. There are men who, though they have not sense enough to be true, have nevertheless sense enough to know that they cannot expect to be really believed in by those who are near enough to them to know them. Sir Raffle Buffle was such a one. He would have greatly delighted in the services of some one who would trust him implicitly,—of some young man who would really believe all that he said of himself and of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he was wise enough to perceive that no such young man was to be had; or that any such young man,—could such a one be found,—would be absolutely useless for any purposes of work. He knew himself to be a liar whom nobody trusted. And he knew himself also to be a bully,—though he could not think so low of himself as to believe that he was a bully whom nobody feared. A private secretary was at the least bound to pretend to believe in him. There is a decency in such things, and that decency John Eames did not observe. He thought that he must get rid of John Eames, in spite of certain attractions which belonged to Johnny's appearance and general manners, and social standing, and reputed wealth. But it would not be wise to punish a man on the spot for breaking an appointment which he himself had not kept, and therefore he would wait for another opportunity. "You had better go to your own room now," he said. "I am engaged on a matter connected with the Treasury in which I will not ask for your assistance." He knew that Eames would not believe a word as to what he said about the Treasury,—not even some very trifling base of truth which did exist; but the boast gave him an opportunity of putting an end to the interview after his own fashion. Then John Eames went to his own room and answered the letters which he had in his pocket.

To the club dinner he would not go. "What's the use of paying two guineas for a dinner with fellows you see every day of your life?" he said. To Lady Glencora's he would go, and he wrote a line to his

friend Dalrymple proposing that they should go together. And he would dine with his cousin Toogood in Tavistock Square. "One meets the queerest people in the world there," he said; "but Tommy Toogood is such a good fellow himself!" After that he had his lunch. Then he read the paper, and before he went away he wrote a dozen or two of private notes, presenting Sir Raffle's compliments right and left, and giving in no one note a single word of information that could be of any use to any person. Having thus earned his salary by half-past four o'clock he got into a hansom cab and had himself driven to Porchester Terrace. Miss Demolines was at home, of course, and he soon found himself closeted with that interesting young woman.

"I thought you never would have come." These were the first words she spoke.

"My dear Miss Demolines, you must not forget that I have my bread to earn."

"Fiddlestick,—bread! As if I didn't know that you can get away from your office when you choose."

"But, indeed, I cannot."

"What is there to prevent you, Mr. Eames?"

"I'm not tied up like a dog, certainly; but who do you suppose will do my work if I do not do it myself? It is a fact, though the world does not believe it, that men in public offices have got something to do."

"Now you are laughing at me, I know; but you are welcome, if you like it. It's the way of the world just at present that ladies should submit to that sort of thing from gentlemen."

"What sort of thing, Miss Demolines?"

"Chaff,—as you call it. Courtesy is out of fashion, and gallantry has come to signify quite a different kind of thing from what it used to do."

"The Sir Charles Grandison business is done and gone. That's what you mean, I suppose? Don't you think we should find it very heavy if we tried to get it back again?"

"I'm not going to ask you to be a Sir Charles Grandison, Mr. Eames. But never mind all that now. Do you know that that girl has absolutely had her first sitting for the picture?"

"Has she, indeed?"

"She has. You may take my word for it. I know it as a fact. What a fool that young man is!"

"Which young man?"

"Which young man! Conway Dalrymple to be sure. Artists are always weak. Of all men in the world they are the most subject to flattery from women; and we all know that Conway Dalrymple is very vain."

"Upon my word I didn't know it," said Johnny.

"Yes, you do. You must know it. When a man goes about in a purple velvet coat of course he is vain."

"I certainly cannot defend a purple velvet coat."

"That is what he wore when this girl sat to him this morning."

"This morning was it?"

"Yes; this morning. They little think that they can do nothing without my knowing it. He was there for nearly four hours, and she was dressed up in a white robe as Jael, with a turban on her head. Jael, indeed! I call it very improper, and I am quite astonished that Maria Clutterbuck should have lent herself to such a piece of work. That Maria was never very wise, of course we all know; but I thought that she had principle enough to have kept her from this kind of thing."

"It's her fevered existence," said Johnny.

"That is just it. She must have excitement. It is like dram-drinking. And then, you know, they are always living in the crater of a volcano."

"Who are living in the crater of a volcano?"

"The Dobbs Broughtons are. Of course they are. There is no saying what day a smash may come. These City people get so used to it that they enjoy it. The risk is everything to them."

"They like to have a little certainty behind the risk, I fancy."

"I'm afraid there is very little that's certain with Dobbs Broughton. But about this picture, Mr. Eames. I look to you to assist me there. It must be put a stop to. As to that I am determined. It must be—put a—stop to." And as Miss Demolines repeated these last words with tremendous emphasis she lent with both her elbows on a little table that stood between her and her visitor, and looked with all her eyes into his face. "I do hope that you agree with me in that," said she.

"Upon my word I do not see the harm of the picture," said he.

"You do not?"

"Indeed, no. Why should not Dalrymple paint Miss Van Siever as well as any other lady? It is his special business to paint ladies."

"Look here, Mr. Eames——" And now Miss Demolines, as she spoke, drew her own seat closer to that of her companion and pushed away the little table. "Do you suppose that Conway Dalrymple, in the usual way of his business, paints pictures of young ladies, of which their mothers know nothing? Do you suppose that he paints them in ladies' rooms without their husbands' knowledge? And in the common way of his business does he not expect to be paid for his pictures?"

"But what is all that to you and me, Miss Demolines?"

"Is the welfare of your friend nothing to you? Would you like to see him become the victim of the artifice of such a girl as Clara Van Siever?"

"Upon my word I think he is very well able to take care of himself."

"And would you wish to see that poor creature's domestic hearth ruined and broken up?"

"Which poor creature?"

"Dobbs Broughton, to be sure."

"I can't pretend that I care very much for Dobbs Broughton," said John Eames; "and you see I know so little about his domestic hearth."

"Oh, Mr. Eames!"

"Besides, her principles will pull her through. You told me yourself that Mrs. Broughton has high principles."

"God forbid that I should say a word against Maria Clutterbuck," said Miss Demolines, fervently. "Maria Clutterbuck was my early friend, and though words have been spoken which never should have been spoken, and though things have been done which never should have been even dreamed of, still I will not desert Maria Clutterbuck in her hour of need. No, never!"

"I'm sure you're what one may call a trump to your friends, Miss Demolines."

"I have always endeavoured to be so, and always shall. You will

find me so; that is, if you and I ever become intimate enough to feel that sort of friendship."

"There's nothing on earth I should like better," said Johnny. As soon as the words were out of his mouth he felt ashamed of himself. He knew that he did not in truth desire the friendship of Miss Demolines, and that any friendship with such a one would mean something different from friendship,—something that would be an injury to Lily Dale. A week had hardly passed since he had sworn a life's constancy to Lily Dale,—had sworn it, not to her only, but to himself; and now he was giving way to a flirtation with this woman, not because he liked it himself, but because he was too weak to keep out of it.

"If that is true——," said Miss Demolines.

"Oh, yes; it's quite true," said Johnny.

"Then you must earn my friendship by doing what I ask of you. That picture must not be painted. You must tell Conway Dalrymple as his friend that he must cease to carry on such an intrigue in another man's house."

"You would hardly call painting a picture an intrigue; would you?"

"Certainly I would when it's kept a secret from the husband by the wife,—and from the mother by the daughter. If it cannot be stopped in any other way, I must tell Mrs. Van Siever;—I must, indeed. I have such an abhorrence of the old woman, that I could not bring myself to speak to her,—but I should write to her. That's what I should do."

"But what's the reason? You might as well tell me the real reason." Had Miss Demolines been christened Mary, or Fanny, or Jane, I think that John Eames would now have called her by either of those names; but Madalina was such a mouthful that he could not bring himself to use it at once. He had heard that among her intimates she was called Maddy. He had an idea that he had heard Dalrymple in old times talk of her as Maddy Mullins, and just at this moment the idea was not pleasant to him; at any rate he could not call her Maddy as yet. "How am I to help you," he said, "unless I know all about it?"

"I hate that girl like poison!" said Miss Demolines, confidentially, drawing herself very near to Johnny as she spoke.

"But what has she done?"

"What has she done? I can't tell you what she has done. I could not demean myself by repeating it. Of course we all know what she wants. She wants to catch Conway Dalrymple. That's as plain as anything can be. Not that I care about that."

"Of course not," said Johnny.

"Not in the least. It's nothing to me. I have known Mr. Dalrymple, no doubt, for a year or two, and I should be sorry to see a young man who has his good points sacrificed in that sort of way. But it is mere acquaintance between Mr. Dalrymple and me, and of course I cannot interfere."

"She'll have a lot of money, you know."

"He thinks so; does he? I suppose that is what Maria has told him. Oh, Mr. Eames, you don't know the meanness of women; you don't, indeed. Men are so much more noble."

"Are they, do you think?"

"Than some women. I see women doing things that really disgust me; I do, indeed;—things that I wouldn't do myself, were it ever so;—striving to catch men in every possible way, and for such purposes! I wouldn't have believed it of Maria Clutterbuck. I wouldn't, indeed. However, I will never say a word against her, because she has been my friend. Nothing shall ever induce me."

John Eames, before he left Porchester Terrace, had at last succeeded in calling his fair friend Madalina, and had promised that he would endeavour to open the artist's eyes to the folly of painting his picture in Broughton's house without Broughton's knowledge.

CHAPTER XL.

MR. TOOGOOD'S IDEAS ABOUT SOCIETY.

A DAY or two after the interview which was described in the last chapter John Eames dined with his uncle Mr. Thomas Toogood, in Tavistock Square. He was in the habit of doing this about once a month, and was a great favourite both with his cousins and with their mother. Mr. Toogood did not give dinner-parties; always begging those whom he asked to enjoy his hospitality, to take pot-luck, and telling young men whom he could treat with familiarity,—such as his nephew,—that if they wanted to be regaled à la Russe they must not come to number 75, Tavistock Square. "A leg of mutton and trimmings; that will be about the outside of it," he would say; but he would add in a whisper,—"and a glass of port such as you don't get every day of your life." Polly and Lucy Toogood were pretty girls, and merry withal, and certain young men were well contented to accept the attorney's invitations,—whether attracted by the promised leg of mutton, or the port-wine, or the young ladies, I will not attempt to say. But it had so happened that one young man, a clerk from John Eames' office, had partaken so often of the pot-luck and port-wine that Polly Toogood had conquered him by her charms, and he was now a slave, waiting an appropriate time for matrimonial sacrifice. William Summerkin was the young man's name; and as it was known that Mr. Summerkin was to inherit a fortune amounting to five thousand pounds from his maiden aunt, it was considered that Polly Toogood was not doing amiss. "I'll give you three hundred pounds, my boy, just to put a few sheets on the beds," said Toogood the father, "and when the old birds are both dead she'll have a thousand pounds out of the nest. That's the extent of Polly's fortune;—so now you know." Summerkin was, however, quite contented to have his own money settled on his darling Polly, and the whole thing was looked at with pleasant and propitious eyes by the Toogood connection.

When John Eames entered the drawing-room Summerkin and Polly were already there. Summerkin blushed up to his eyes, of course, but Polly sat as demurely as though she had been accustomed to having lovers all her life. "Mamma will be down almost immediately, John," said Polly as soon as the first greetings were over, "and papa has come in, I know."

"Summerkin," said Johnny, "I'm afraid you left the office before four o'clock."

"No, I did not," said Summerkin. "I deny it."

"Polly," said her cousin, "you should keep him in better order. He will certainly come to grief if he goes on like this. I suppose you could do without him for half-an-hour?"

"I don't want him, I can assure you," said Polly.

"I have only been here just five minutes," said Summerkin, "and I came because Mrs. Toogood asked me to do a commission."

"That's civil to you, Polly," said John.

"It's quite as civil as I wish him to be," said Polly. "And as for you, John, everybody knows that you're a goose, and that you always were a goose. Isn't he always doing foolish things at the office, William?" But as John Eames was rather a great man at the Income-tax Office, Summerkin would not fall into his sweetheart's joke on this subject, finding it easier and perhaps safer to twiddle the bodkins in Polly's work-basket. Then Toogood and Mrs. Toogood entered the room together, and the lovers were able to be alone again during the general greeting with which Johnny was welcomed.

"You don't know the Silverbridge people,—do you?" asked Mr. Toogood. Eames said that he did not. He had been at Silverbridge more than once, but did not know very much of the Silverbridgians. "Because Walker is coming to dine here. Walker is the leading man in Silverbridge."

"And what is Walker;—besides being leading man in Silverbridge?"

"He's a lawyer. Walker and Winthrop. Everybody knows Walker in Barsetshire. I've been down at Barchester since I saw you."

"Have you indeed?" said Johnny.

"And I'll tell you what I've been about. You know Mr. Crawley; don't you?"

"The Hogglestock clergyman that has come to grief? I don't know him personally. He's a sort of cousin by marriage, you know."

"Of course he is," said Mr. Toogood. "His wife is my first-cousin, and your mother's first-cousin. He came here to me the other day;—or rather to the shop. I had never seen the man before in my life, and a very queer fellow he is too. He came to me about this trouble of his, and of course I must do what I can for him. I got myself introduced to Walker, who has the management of the prosecution, and I asked him to come here and dine to-day."

"And what sort of fellow did you find Crawley, uncle Tom?"

"Such a queer fish;—so unlike anybody else in the world!"

"But I suppose he did take the money?" said Johnny.

"I don't know what to say about it. I don't indeed. If he took it he didn't mean to steal it. I'm as sure that man didn't mean to steal twenty pounds as I ever could be of anything. Perhaps I shall get something about it out of Walker after dinner." Then Mr. Walker entered the room. "This is very kind of you, Mr. Walker; very, indeed. I take it quite as a compliment, your coming in in this sort of way. It's just pot-luck, you know, and nothing else." Mr. Walker of course assured his host that he was delighted. "Just a leg of mutton and a bottle of old port, Mr. Walker," continued Toogood. "We never get beyond that in the way of dinner-giving; do we, Maria?"

But Maria was at this moment descanting on the good luck of the family to her nephew,—and on one special piece of good luck which had just occurred. Mr. Summerkin's maiden aunt had declared her intention of giving up the fortune to the young people at once. She had enough to live upon, she said, and would therefore make two lovers happy. "And they're to be married on the first of May," said Lucy,—that Lucy of whom her father had boasted to Mr. Crawley that she knew Byron by heart,—"and won't that be jolly? Mamma is going out to look for a house for them to-morrow. Fancy Polly with a house of her own! Won't it be stunning? I wish you were going to be married too, Johnny."

"Don't be a fool, Lucy."

"Of course I know that you are in love. I hope you are not going to give over being in love, Johnny, because it is such fun."

"Wait till you're caught yourself, my girl."

"I don't mean to be caught till some great swell comes this way.

And as great swells never do come into Tavistock Square, I shan't have a chance. I'll tell you what I would like; I'd like to have a Corsair,—or else a Giaour;—I think a Giaour would be nicest. Only a Giaour wouldn't be a Giaour here, you know. Fancy a lover 'Who thundering comes on blackest steed, With slackened bit and hoof of speed.' Were not those the days to live in! But all that is over now, you know, and young people take houses in Woburn Place, instead of being locked up, or drowned, or married to a hideous monster behind a veil. I suppose it's better as it is, for some reasons."

"I think it must be more jolly, as you call it, Lucy."

"I'm not quite sure. I know I'd go back and be Medora, if I could. Mamma is always telling Polly that she must be careful about William's dinner. But Conrad didn't care for his dinner. 'Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare! See, I have plucked the fruit that promised best.'"

"And how often do you think Conrad got drunk?"

"I don't think he got drunk at all. There is no reason why he should, any more than William. Come along, and take me down to dinner. After all, papa's leg of mutton is better than Medora's apples, when one is as hungry as I am."

The leg of mutton on this occasion consisted of soup, fish, and a bit of roast beef, and a couple of boiled fowls. "If I had only two children instead of twelve, Mr. Walker," said the host, "I'd give you a dinner à la Russe."

"I don't begrudge Mrs. Toogood a single arrow in her quiver on that score," said Mr. Walker.

"People are getting to be so luxurious that one can't live up to them at all," said Mrs. Toogood. "We dined out here with some new comers in the square only last week. We had asked them before, and they came quite in a quiet way,—just like this; and when we got there we found they'd four kinds of ices after dinner!"

"And not a morsel of food on the table fit to eat," said Toogood. "I never was so poisoned in my life. As for soup,—it was just the washings of the pastrycook's kettle next door."

"And how is one to live with such people, Mr. Walker?" continued Mrs. Toogood. "Of course we can't ask them back again. We can't give them four kinds of ices."

"But would that be necessary? Perhaps they haven't got twelve children."

"They haven't got any," said Toogood, triumphing; "not a chick belonging to them. But you see one must do as other people do. I hate anything grand. I wouldn't want more than this for myself, if bank-notes were as plenty as curl-papers."

"Nobody has any curl-papers now, papa," said Lucy.

"But I can't bear to be outdone," said Mr. Toogood. "I think it's very unpleasant,—people living in that sort of way. It's all very well telling me that I needn't live so too;—and of course I don't. I can't afford to have four men in from the confectioner's, dressed a sight better than myself, at ten shillings a head. I can't afford it, and I don't do it. But the worst of it is that I suffer because other people do it. It stands to reason that I must either be driven along with the crowd, or else be left behind. Now, I don't like either. And what's the end of it? Why, I'm half carried away and half left behind."

"Upon my word, papa, I don't think you're carried away at all," said Lucy.

"Yes, I am; and I'm ashamed of myself. Mr. Walker, I don't dare to ask you to drink a glass of wine with me in my own house,—that's what I don't,—because it's the proper thing for you to wait till somebody brings it you, and then to drink it by yourself. There is no knowing whether I mightn't offend you." And Mr. Toogood as he spoke grasped the decanter at his elbow. Mr. Walker grasped another at his elbow, and the two attorneys took their glass of wine together.

"A very queer case this is of my cousin Crawley's," said Toogood to Walker, when the ladies had left the dining-room.

"A most distressing case. I never knew anything so much talked of in our part of the country."

"He can't have been a popular man, I should say?"

"No; not popular,—not in the ordinary way;—anything but that. Nobody knew him personally before this matter came up."

"But a good clergyman, probably? I'm interested in the case, of course, as his wife is my first-cousin. You will understand, however, that I know nothing of him. My father tried to be civil to him once, but Crawley wouldn't have it at all. We all thought he was mad then. I suppose he has done his duty in his parish?"

"He has quarrelled with the bishop, you know,—out and out."

"Has he, indeed? But I'm not sure that I think so very much about bishops, Mr. Walker."

"That depends very much on the particular bishop. Some people say ours isn't all that a bishop ought to be, while others are very fond of him."

"And Mr. Crawley belongs to the former set; that's all?" said Mr. Toogood.

"No, Mr. Toogood; that isn't all. The worst of your cousin is that he has an aptitude to quarrel with everybody. He is one of those men who always think themselves to be ill-used. Now our dean, Dr. Arabin, has been his very old friend,—and as far as I can learn, a very good friend; but it seems that Mr. Crawley has done his best to quarrel with him too."

"He spoke of the dean in the highest terms to me."

"He may do that,—and yet quarrel with him. He'd quarrel with his own right hand, if he had nothing else to quarrel with. That makes the difficulty, you see. He'll take nobody's advice. He thinks that we're all against him."

"I suppose the world has been heavy on him, Mr. Walker?"

"The world has been very heavy on him," said John Eames, who had now been left free to join the conversation, Mr. Summerkin having gone away to his lady-love. "You must not judge him as you do other men."

"That is just it," said Mr. Walker. "And to what result will that bring us?"

"That we ought to stretch a point in his favour," said Toogood.

"But why?" asked the attorney from Silverbridge. "What do we mean when we say that one man isn't to be trusted as another? We simply imply that he is not what we call responsible."

"And I don't think Mr. Crawley is responsible," said Johnny.

"Then how can he be fit to have charge of a parish?" said Mr. Walker. "You see where the difficulty is;—how it embarrasses one all round! The amount of evidence as to the cheque is, I think, sufficient to get a verdict in an ordinary case, and the Crown has no alternative but so to treat it. Then his friends come forward,—and from sympathy with his sufferings, I desire to be ranked among the number,—and say, 'Ah, but you should spare this man, because he is

not responsible.' Were he one who filled no position requiring special responsibility, that might be very well. His friends might undertake to look after him, and the prosecution might perhaps be smothered. But Mr. Crawley holds a living, and if he escape he will be triumphant, —especially triumphant over the bishop. Now, if he has really taken this money, and if his only excuse be that he did not know when he took it whether he was stealing or whether he was not,—for the sake of justice that ought not to be allowed." So spoke Mr. Walker.

"You think he certainly did steal the money?" said Johnny.

"You have heard the evidence, no doubt?" said Mr. Walker.

"I don't feel quite sure about it yet," said Mr. Toogood.

"Quite sure of what?" said Mr. Walker.

"That the cheque was dropped in his house."

"It was at any rate traced to his hands."

"I have no doubt about that," said Toogood.

"And he can't account for it," said Walker.

"A man isn't bound to show where he got his money," said Johnny. "Suppose that sovereign is marked," and Johnny produced a coin from his pocket, "and I don't know but what it is; and suppose it is proved to have belonged to some one who lost it, and then to be traced to my hands,—how am I to say where I got it? If I were asked, I should simply decline to answer."

"But a cheque is not a sovereign, Mr. Eames," said Walker. "It is presumed that a man can account for the possession of a cheque. It may be that a man should have a cheque in his possession and not be able to account for it, and should yet be open to no grave suspicion. In such a case a jury has to judge. Here is the fact; that Mr. Crawley has the cheque, and brings it into use some considerable time after it is drawn; and the additional fact that the drawer of the cheque had lost it, as he thought, in Mr. Crawley's house, and had looked for it there, soon after it was drawn, and long before it was paid. A jury must judge; but as a lawyer, I should say that the burden of disproof lies with Mr. Crawley."

"Did you find out anything, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, "about the man who drove Mr. Soames that day?"

"No,—nothing."

"The trap was from 'The Dragon' at Barchester, I think?"

"Yes,—from 'The Dragon of Wantly.'"

"A respectable sort of house?"

"Pretty well for that, I believe. I've heard that the people are poor," said Mr. Walker.

"Somebody told me that they'd had a queer lot about the house, and that three or four of them left just then. I think I heard that two or three men from the place went to New Zealand together. It just came out in conversation while I was in the inn-yard."

"I have never heard anything of it," said Mr. Walker.

"I don't say that it can help us."

"I don't see that it can," said Mr. Walker.

After that there was a pause, and Mr. Toogood pushed about the old port, and made some very stinging remarks as to the claret-drinking propensities of the age. "Gladstone claret the most of it is, I fancy," said Mr. Toogood. "I find that port-wine which my father bought in the wood five-and-twenty years ago is good enough for me." Mr. Walker said that it was quite good enough for him, almost too good, and that he thought that he had had enough of it. The host threatened another bottle, and was up to draw the cork,—rather to the satisfaction of John Eames, who liked his uncle's port,—but Mr. Walker stopped him. "Not a drop more for me," he said.

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure." And Mr. Walker moved towards the door.

"It's a great pity, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, going back to the old subject, "that this dean and his wife should be away."

"I understand that they will both be home before the trial," said Mr. Walker.

"Yes,—but you know how very important it is to learn beforehand exactly what your witnesses can prove and what they can't prove. And moreover, though neither the dean nor his wife might perhaps be able to tell us anything themselves, they might help to put us on the proper scent. I think I'll send somebody after them. I think I will."

"It would be a heavy expense, Mr. Toogood."

"Yes," said Toogood, mournfully, thinking of the twelve children; "it would be a heavy expense. But I never like to stick at a thing when it ought to be done. I think I shall send a fellow after them."

"I'll go," said Johnny.

"How can you go?"

"I'll make old Snuffle give me leave."

"But will that lessen the expense?" said Mr. Walker.

"Well, yes, I think it will," said John, modestly.

"My nephew is a rich man, Mr. Walker," said Toogood.

"That alters the case," said Mr. Walker. And thus, before they left the dining-room, it was settled that John Eames should be taught his lesson and should seek both Mrs. Arabin and Dr. Arabin on their travels.

CHAPTER XLI.

GRACE CRAWLEY AT HOME.

On the morning after his return from London Mr. Crawley showed symptoms of great fatigue, and his wife implored him to remain in bed. But this he would not do. He would get up, and go out down to the brickfields. He had specially bound himself, he said, to see that the duties of the parish did not suffer by being left in his hands. The bishop had endeavoured to place them in other hands, but he had persisted in retaining them. As he had done so he could allow no weariness of his own to interfere,—and especially no weariness induced by labours undertaken on his own behalf. The day in the week had come round on which it was his wont to visit the brickmakers, and he would visit them. So he dragged himself out of his bed and went forth amidst the cold storm of a harsh wet March morning. His wife well knew when she heard his first word on that morning that one of those terrible moods had come upon him which made her doubt whether she ought to allow him to go anywhere alone. Latterly there had been some improvement in his mental health. Since the day of his encounter with the bishop and Mrs. Proudie, though he had been as stubborn as ever, he had been less apparently unhappy, less depressed in spirits.

"A respectable sort of house?"

"Pretty well for that, I believe. I've heard that the people are poor," said Mr. Walker.

"Somebody told me that there I had a queer lot about the house, and that three or four of them left just then. I think I heard that two or three men from the place went to New Zealand together. It just came out in a conversation while I was in the inn-yard."

"I have never heard anything of it," said Mr. Walker.

"I don't see that it can help us."

"I don't see that it can," said Mr. Walker.

After that there was a pause, and Mr. Toogood pushed about the old port, and made some very stinging remarks as to the claret-drinking propensities of the age. "Handsome claret the most of it is, I fancy," said Mr. Toogood. "I find that port-wine which my father bought in the wood five-and-twenty years ago is good enough for me." Mr. Walker said that it was quite good enough for him, almost too good, and that he thought that he had had enough of it. The host threatened another bottle and was up to draw the cork,—rather to the satisfaction of Mr. James, who liked his uncle's port,—but Mr. Walker stopped him. "Not a drop more for me," he said.

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure." And Mr. Walker moved towards the door.

"It's a great pity, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, going back to the old subject, "that Jean and his wife should be away."

"I understand that they will both be home before the trial," said Mr. Walker.

"Yes. But you know how very important it is to learn beforehand what your witnesses can prove and what they can't prove. I don't suppose, though neither the Jean nor his wife might perhaps be able to do us any good themselves, they might help to put us on the right scent. I think I will send somebody after them. I think I will."

"It would be a heavy expense, Mr. Toogood."

"Yes," said Toogood, reluctantly, thinking of [illegible] "It would be a heavy expense. But I never [illegible] I think I shall."

"I am sure I don't know," said Walker.

"You are not going?"

"I must ask old Scatchy to give me leave

"But will that les[illegible]
"Well, yes, I think [illegible]
"My nephew is a [illegible]
"That alters the [illegible]
left the dining-room. [illegible]
his lesson and shoul[illegible]
travels.

[illegible]

On the morning [illegible]
symptoms of [illegible]
But this he [illegible]
brickfields. He [illegible]
duties of the [illegible]
bishop had [illegible]
sisted in retaining [illegible]
ness of his own [illegible]
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visit them. So he [illegible]
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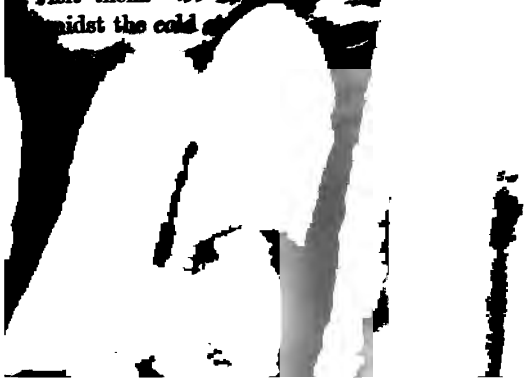

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And the journey to London had done him good. His wife had congratulated herself on finding him able to set about his work like another man, and he himself had experienced a renewal, if not of hope, at any rate, of courage, which had given him a comfort which he had recognized. His common-sense had not been very striking in his interview with Mr. Toogood, but yet he had talked more rationally then and had given a better account of the matter in hand than could have been expected from him for some weeks previously. But now that the labour was over, a reaction had come upon him, and he went away from his house having hardly spoken a word to his wife after the speech which he made about his duty to his parish.

I think that at this time nobody saw clearly the working of his mind,—not even his wife, who studied it very closely, who gave him credit for all his high qualities, and who had gradually learned to acknowledge to herself that she must distrust his judgment in many things. She knew that he was good and yet weak, that he was afflicted by false pride and supported by true pride, that his intellect was still very bright, yet so dismally obscured on many sides as almost to justify people in saying that he was mad. She knew that he was almost a saint, and yet almost a castaway through vanity and hatred of those above him. But she did not know that he knew all this of himself also. She did not comprehend that he should be hourly telling himself that people were calling him mad and were so calling him with truth. It did not occur to her that he could see her insight into him. She doubted as to the way in which he had got the cheque,—never imagining, however, that he had wilfully stolen it;—thinking that his mind had been so much astray as to admit of his finding it and using it without wilful guilt,—thinking also, alas, that a man who could so act was hardly fit for such duties as those which were entrusted to him. But she did not dream that this was precisely his own idea of his own state and of his own position;—that he was always inquiring of himself whether he was not mad; whether, if mad, he was not bound to lay down his office; that he was ever taxing himself with improper hostility to the bishop,—never forgetting for a moment his wrath against the bishop and the bishop's wife, still comforting himself with his triumph over the bishop and the bishop's wife,—but, for all that, accusing himself of a heavy sin and proposing to himself to go to the palace and there humbly to relinquish his clerical authority. Such a course

of action he was proposing to himself, but not with any realized idea that he would so act. He was as a man who walks along a river's bank thinking of suicide, calculating how best he might kill himself,—whether the river does not offer an opportunity too good to be neglected, telling himself that for many reasons he had better do so, suggesting to himself that the water is pleasant and cool, and that his ears would soon be deaf to the harsh noises of the world,—but yet knowing, or thinking that he knows, that he will never kill himself. So it was with Mr. Crawley. Though his imagination pictured to himself the whole scene,—how he would humble himself to the ground as he acknowledged his unfitness, how he would endure the small-voiced triumph of the little bishop, how, from the abjectness of his own humility, even from the ground on which he would be crouching, he would rebuke the loud-mouthed triumph of the bishop's wife; though there was no touch wanting to the picture which he thus drew,—he did not really propose to himself to commit this professional suicide. His wife, too, had considered whether it might be in truth becoming that he should give up his clerical duties at any rate for a while; but she had never thought that the idea was present to his mind also.

Mr. Toogood had told him that people would say that he was mad; and Mr. Toogood had looked at him, when he declared for the second time that he had no knowledge whence the cheque had come to him, as though his words were to be regarded as the words of some sick child. "Mad!" he said to himself, as he walked home from the station that night. "Well; yes; and what if I am mad? When I think of all that I have endured my wonder is that I should not have been mad sooner." And then he prayed,—yes, prayed, that in his madness the Devil might not be too strong for him, and that he might be preserved from some terrible sin of murder or violence. What, if the idea should come to him in his madness that it would be well for him to slay his wife and his children? Only that was wanting to make him of all men the most unfortunate.

He went down among the brickmakers on the following morning, leaving the house almost without a morsel of food, and he remained at Hoggle End for the greater part of the day. There were sick persons there with whom he prayed, and then he sat talking with rough men while they ate their dinners, and he read passages from the Bible to women while they washed their husbands' clothes. And for a while he

sat with a little girl in his lap teaching the child her alphabet. If it were possible for him he would do his duty. He would spare himself in nothing, though he might suffer even to fainting. And on this occasion he did suffer,—almost to fainting, for as as he returned home in the afternoon he was forced to lean from time to time against the banks on the road-side, while the cold sweat of weakness trickled down his face, in order that he might recover strength to go on a few yards. But he would persevere. If God would but leave to him mind enough for his work, he would go on. No personal suffering should deter him. He told himself that there had been men in the world whose sufferings were sharper even than his own. Of what sort had been the life of the man who had stood for years on the top of a pillar? But then the man on the pillar had been honoured by all around him. And thus, though he had thought of the man on the pillar to encourage himself by remembering how lamentable had been that man's suffering, he came ro reflect that after all his own sufferings were perhaps keener than those of the man on the pillar.

When he reached home, he was very ill. There was no doubt about it then. He staggered to his arm-chair, and stared at his wife first, then smiled at her with a ghastly smile. He trembled all over, and when food was brought to him he could not eat it. Early on the next morning the doctor was by his bedside, and before that evening came he was delirious. He had been at intervals in this state for nearly two days, when Mrs. Crawley wrote to Grace, and though she had restrained herself from telling everything, she had written with sufficient strength to bring Grace at once to her father's bedside.

He was not so ill when Grace arrived but that he knew her, and he seemed to receive some comfort from her coming. Before she had been in the house an hour she was reading Greek to him, and there was no wandering in his mind as to the due emphasis to be given to the plaints of the injured heroines, or as to the proper meaning of the choruses. And as he lay with his head half buried in the pillows, he shouted out long passages, lines from tragic plays by the score, and for a while seemed to have all the enjoyment of a dear old pleasure placed newly within his reach. But he tired of this after a while, and then, having looked round to see that his wife was not in the room, he began to talk of himself.

"So you have been to Allington, my dear?"

"Yes, papa."

"Is it a pretty place?"

"Yes, papa;—very pretty."

"And they were good to you?"

"Yes, papa;—very good."

"Had they heard anything there about—me; of this trial that is to come on?"

"Yes, papa; they had heard of it."

"And what did they say? You need not think that you will shock me by telling me. They cannot say worse there than people have said here,—or think worse."

"They don't think at all badly of you at Allington, papa."

"But they must think badly of me if the magistrates were right?"

"They suppose that there has been a mistake;—as we all think."

"They do not try men at the assizes for mistakes."

"That you have been mistaken, I mean;—and the magistrates mistaken."

"Both cannot have been mistaken, Grace."

"I don't know how to explain myself, papa; but we all know that it is very sad, and are quite sure that you have never meant for one moment to do anything that was wrong."

"But people when they are,—you know what I mean, Grace; when they are not themselves,—do things that are wrong without meaning it." Then he paused, while she remained standing by him with her hand on the back of his. She was looking at his face, which had been turned towards her while they were reading together, but which now was so far moved that she knew that his eyes could not be fixed upon hers. "Of course if the bishop orders it, it shall be so," he said. "It is quite enough for me that he is the bishop."

"What has the bishop ordered, papa?"

"Nothing at all. It is she who does it. He has given no opinion about it. Of course not. He has none to give. It is the woman. You go and tell her from me that in such a matter I will not obey the word of any woman living. Go at once, when I tell you." Then she knew that her father's mind was wandering, and she knelt down by the bedside, still holding his hand. "Grace," he said.

"Yes, papa, I am here."

"Why do you not do what I tell you?" And he sat upright in his bed. "I suppose you are afraid of the woman?"

"I should be afraid of her, dear papa."

"I was not afraid of her. When she spoke to me, I would have nothing to say to her;—not a word; not a word;—not a word." As he said this he waved his hands about. "But as for him,—if it must be, it must. I know I'm not fit for it. Of course I am not. Who is? But what has he ever done that he should be a dean? I beat him at everything; almost at everything. He got the Newdegate and that was about all. Upon my word I think that was all."

"But Dr. Arabin loves you truly, dear papa."

"Love me! psha! Does he ever come here to tea, as he used to do. No! I remember buttering toast for him down on my knees before the fire, because he liked it,—and keeping all the cream for him. He should have had my heart's blood if he wanted it. But now;—look at his books, Grace. It's the outside of them he cares about. They are all gilt, but I doubt if he ever reads. As for her,—I will not allow any woman to tell me my duty. No;—by my Maker; not even your mother, who is the best of women. And as for her, with her little husband dangling at her apron-strings, as a call-whistle to be blown into when she pleases,—that she should dare to teach me my duty! No! The men in the jury-box may decide it how they will. If they can believe a plain story, let them! If not,—let them do as they please. I am ready to bear it all."

"Dear papa, you are tired. Will you not try to sleep?"

"Tell Mrs. Proudie what I say; and as for Arabin's money, I took it. I know I took it. What would you have had me do? Shall I —see them—all—starve?" Then he fell back upon his bed and did sleep.

The next day he was better, and insisted upon getting out of bed, and on sitting in his old arm-chair over the fire. And the Greek books were again had out; and Grace, not at all unwillingly, was put through her facings. "If you don't take care, my dear," he said, "Jane will beat you yet. She understands the force of the verbs better than you do."

"I am very glad that she is doing so well, papa. I am sure I shall not begrudge her her superiority."

"Ah, but you should begrudge it her!" Jane was sitting by at the time, and the two sisters were holding each other by the hand. "Always to be best;—always to be in advance of others. That should be your motto."

"But we can't both be best, papa," said Jane.

"You can both strive to be best. But Grace has the better voice. I remember when I knew the whole of the Antigone by heart. You girls should see which can learn it first."

"It would take such a long time," said Jane.

"You are young, and what can you do better with your leisure hours? Fie, Jane! I did not expect that from you. When I was learning it I had eight or nine pupils, and read an hour a day with each of them. But I think that nobody works now as they used to work then. Where is your mamma? Tell her I think I could get out as far as Mrs. Cox's, if she would help me to dress." Soon after this he was in bed again, and his head was wandering; but still they knew that he was better than he had been.

"You are more of a comfort to your papa than I can be," said Mrs. Crawley to her eldest daughter that night as they sat together, when everybody else was in bed.

"Do not say that, mamma. Papa does not think so."

"I cannot read Greek plays to him as you can do. I can only nurse him in his illness and endeavour to do my duty. Do you know, Grace, that I am beginning to fear that he half doubts me?"

"Oh, mamma!"

"That he half doubts me, and is half afraid of me. He does not think as he used to do, that I am altogether, heart and soul, on his side. I can see it in his eye as he watches me. He thinks that I am tired of him,—tired of his sufferings, tired of his poverty, tired of the evil which men say of him. I am not sure but what he thinks that I suspect him."

"Of what, mamma?"

"Of general unfitness for the work he has to do. The feeling is not strong as yet, but I fear that he will teach himself to think that he has an enemy at his hearth,—not a friend. It will be the saddest mistake he ever made."

"He told me to-day that you were the best of women. Those were his very words."

"Were they, my dear? I am glad at least that he should say so to you. He has been better since you came;—a great deal better. For one day I was frightened; but I am sorry now that I sent for you."

"I am so glad, mamma; so very glad."

"You were happy there,—and comfortable. And if they were glad to have you, why should I have brought you away?"

"But I was not happy;—even though they were very good to me. How could I be happy there when I was thinking of you and papa and Jane here at home? Whatever there is here, I would sooner share it with you than be anywhere else,—while this trouble lasts."

"My darling!—it is a great comfort to see you again."

"Only that I knew that one less in the house would be a saving to you I should not have gone. When there is unhappiness, people should stay together;—shouldn't they, mamma? They were sitting quite close to each other, on an old sofa in a small upstairs room, from which a door opened into the larger chamber in which Mr. Crawley was lying. It had been arranged between them that on this night Mrs. Crawley should remain with her husband, and that Grace should go to her bed. It was now past one o'clock, but she was still there, clinging to her mother's side, with her mother's arm drawn round her. "Mamma," she said, when they had both been silent for some ten minutes, "I have got something to tell you."

"To-night?"

"Yes, mamma; to-night, if you will let me."

"But you promised that you would go to bed. You were up all last night."

"I am not sleepy, mamma."

"Of course you shall tell me what you please, dearest. Is it a secret? Is it something that I am not to repeat?"

"You must say how that ought to be, mamma. I shall not tell it to any one else."

"Well, dear?"

"Sit comfortably, mamma;—there; like that, and let me have your hand. It's a terrible story to have to tell."

"A terrible story, Grace?"

"I mean that you must not draw away from me. I shall want to

feel that you are quite close to me. Mamma, while I was at Allington, Major Grantly came there."

"Did he, my dear?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Did he know them before?"

"No, mamma; not at the Small House. But he came there—to see me. He asked me—to be his wife. Don't move, mamma."

"My darling child! I won't move, dearest. Well; and what did you say to him? God bless him, at any rate. May God bless him, because he has seen with a true eye, and felt with a noble instinct. It is something, Grace, to have been wooed by such a man at such a time."

"Mamma, it did make me feel proud; it did."

"You had known him well before,—of course? I knew that you and he were friends, Grace."

"Yes, we were friends. I always liked him. I used not to know what to think about him. Miss Anne Prettyman told me that it would be so; and once before I thought so, myself."

"And had you made up your mind what to say to him?"

"Yes, I had then. But I did not say it."

"Did not say what you had made up your mind to say?"

"That was before all this had happened to papa."

"I understand you, dearest."

"When Miss Anne Prettyman told me that I should be ready with my answer, and when I saw that Miss Prettyman herself used to let him come to the house and seemed to wish that I should see him when he came, and when he once was—so very gentle and kind, and when he said that he wanted me to love Edith—— Oh, mamma!"

"Yes, darling, I know. Of course you loved him."

"Yes, mamma. And I do love him. How could one not love him?"

"I love him,—for loving you."

"But, mamma, one is bound not to do a harm to any one that one loves. So when he came to Allington I told him that I could not be his wife."

"Did you, my dear?"

"Yes; I did. Was I not right? Ought I to go to him to bring a

disgrace upon all the family, just because he is so good that he asks me? Shall I injure him because he wants to do me a service?"

"If he loves you, Grace, the service he will require will be your love in return."

"That is all very well, mamma,—in books; but I do not believe it in reality. Being in love is very nice, and in poetry they make it out to be everything. But I do not think I should make Major Grantly happy if when I became his wife his own father and mother would not see him. I know I should be so wretched, myself, that I could not live."

"But would it be so?"

"Yes;—I think it would. And the archdeacon is very rich, and can leave all his money away from Major Grantly if he pleases. Think what I should feel if I were the cause of Edith losing her fortune!"

"But why do you suppose these terrible things?"

"I have a reason for supposing them. This must be a secret. Miss Anne Prettyman wrote to me."

"I wish Miss Anne Prettyman's hand had been in the fire."

"No, mamma; no; she was right. Would not I have wished, do you think, to have learned all the truth about the matter before I answered him? Besides, it made no difference. I could have made no other answer while papa is under such a terrible ban. It is no time for us to think of being in love. We have got to love each other. Isn't it so, mamma?" The mother did not answer in words, but slipping down on her knees before her child threw her arms round her girl's body in a close embrace. "Dear mamma; dearest mamma; this is what I wanted;—that you should love me!"

"Love you, my angel!"

"And trust me;—and that we should understand each other, and stand close by each other. We can do so much to comfort one another;—but we cannot comfort other people."

"He must know that best himself, Grace;—but what did he say more to you?"

"I don't think he said anything more."

"He just left you then?"

"He said one thing more."

"And what was that?"

"He said;—but he had no right to say it."

"What was it, dear?"

"That he knew I loved him, and that therefore—— But, mamma, do not think of that. I will never be his wife,—never, in opposition to his family."

"But he did not take your answer?"

"He must take it, mamma. He shall take it. If he can be stubborn, so can I. If he knows how to think of me more than himself, I can think of him and Edith more than of myself. That is not quite all, mamma. Then he wrote to me. There is his letter."

Mrs. Crawley read the letter. "I suppose you answered it?"

"Yes, I answered it. It was very bad, my letter. I should think after that he will never want to have anything more to say to me. I tried for two days, but I could not write a nice letter."

"But what did you say?"

"I don't in the least remember. It does not in the least signify now, but it was such a bad letter."

"I daresay it was very nice."

"It was terribly stiff, and all about a gentleman."

"All about a gentleman! What do you mean, my dear?"

"Gentleman is such a frightful word to have to use to a gentleman; but I did not know what else to say. Mamma, if you please, we won't talk about it;—not about the letter I mean. As for him, I'll talk about him for ever if you like it. I don't mean to be a bit broken-hearted."

"It seems to me that he is a gentleman."

"Yes, mamma, that he is; and it is that which makes me so proud. When I think of it, I can hardly hold myself. But now I've told you everything, and I'll go away, and go to bed."

CHAPTER XLII.

MR. TOOGOOD TRAVELS PROFESSIONALLY.

MR. TOOGOOD paid another visit to Barsetshire, in order that he might get a little further information which he thought would be necessary before despatching his nephew upon the traces of Dean Arabin and his wife. He went down to Barchester after his work was over by an evening train, and put himself up at "The Dragon of Wantly," intending to have the whole of the next day for his work. Mr. Walker had asked him to come and take a return pot-luck dinner with Mrs. Walker at Silverbridge; and this he had said that he would do. After having "rummaged about for tidings" in Barchester, as he called it, he would take the train to Silverbridge, and would get back to town in time for business on the third day. "One day won't be much, you know," he said to his partner, as he made half an apology for absenting himself on business which was not to be in any degree remunerative.

"That sort of thing is very well when one does it without any expense," said Crump.

"So it is," said Toogood; "and the expense won't make it any worse." He had made up his mind, and it was not probable that anything Mr. Crump might say would deter him.

He saw John Eames before he started. "You'll be ready this day week, will you?" John Eames promised that he would. "It will cost you some forty pounds, I should say. By George, if you have to go on to Jerusalem, it will cost you more." In answer to this, Johnny pleaded that it would be as good as any other tour to him. He would see the world. "I'll tell you what," said Toogood; "I'll pay half. Only you mustn't tell Crump. And it will be quite as well not to tell Maria." But Johnny would hear nothing of this scheme. He would pay the entire cost of his own journey. He had lots of money, he said, and would like nothing better. "Then I'll run down"

said Toogood, "and rummage up what tidings I can. As for writing to the dean, what's the good of writing to a man when you don't know where he is? Business letters always lie at hotels for two months, and then come back with double postage. From all I can hear, you'll stumble on her before you find him. If we do nothing but bring him back, it will be a great thing to have the support of such a friend in the court. A Barchester jury won't like to find a man guilty who is hand-and-glove with the dean."

Mr. Toogood reached the "Dragon" about eleven o'clock, and allowed the boots to give him a pair of slippers and a candlestick. But he would not go to bed just at that moment. He would go into the coffee-room first, and have a glass of hot brandy-and-water. So the hot brandy-and-water was brought to him, and a cigar, and as he smoked and drank he conversed with the waiter. The man was a waiter of the ancient class, a gray-haired waiter, with seedy clothes, and a dirty towel under his arm; not a dapper waiter, with black shiny hair, and dressed like a guest for a dinner-party. There are two distinct classes of waiters, and as far as I have been able to perceive, the special status of the waiter in question cannot be decided by observation of the class of waiter to which he belongs. In such a town as Barchester you may find the old waiter with the dirty towel in the head inn, or in the second-class inn, and so you may the dapper waiter. Or you may find both in each, and not know which is senior waiter and which junior waiter. But for service I always prefer the old waiter with the dirty towel, and I find it more easy to satisfy him in the matter of sixpences when my relations with the inn come to an end.

"Have you been here long, John?" said Mr. Toogood.

"A goodish many years, sir."

"So I thought, by the look of you. One can see that you belong in a way to the place. You do a good deal of business here, I suppose, at this time of the year?"

"Well, sir, pretty fair. The house ain't what it used to be, sir."

"Times are bad at Barchester,—are they?"

"I don't know much about the times. It's the people is worse than the times, I think. They used to like to have a little bit of dinner now and again at a hotel!—and a drop of something to drink after it."

"And don't they like it now?"

"I think they like it well enough, but they don't do it. I suppose it's their wives as don't let 'em come out and enjoy theirselves. There used to be the Goose and Glee club;—that was once a month. They've gone and clean done away with themselves,—that club has. There's old Bumpter in the High Street,—he's the last of the old Geese. They died off, you see, and when Mr. Biddle died they wouldn't choose another president. A club for having dinner, sir, ain't nothing without a president."

"I suppose not."

"And there's the Freemasons. They must meet, you know, sir, in course, because of the dooties. But if you'll believe me, sir, they don't so much as wet their whistles. They don't indeed. It always used to be a supper, and that was once a month. Now they pays a rent for the use of the room! Who is to get a living out of that, sir?—not in the way of a waiter, that is."

"If that's the way things are going on I suppose the servants leave their places pretty often?"

"I don't know about that, sir. A man may do a deal worse than 'The Dragon of Wantly.' Them as goes away to better themselves, often worses themselves, as I call it. I've seen a good deal of that."

"And you stick to the old shop?"

"Yes, sir; I've been here fifteen year, I think it is. There's a many goes away, as doesn't go out of their own heads, you know, sir."

"They get the sack, you mean?"

"There's words between them and master,—or more likely, missus. That's where it is. Servants is so foolish. I often tell 'em how wrong folks are to say that soft words butter no parsnips, and hard words break no bones."

"I think you've lost some of the old hands here since this time last year, John?"

"You knows the house then, sir?"

"Well;—I've been here before."

"There was four of them went, I think it's just about twelve months back, sir."

"There was a man in the yard I used to know, and last time I was down here I found that he was gone."

"There was one of 'em out of the yard, and two out of the house

Master and them had got to very high words. There was poor Scuttle, who had been post-boy at 'The Compasses' before he came here."

"He went away to New Zealand, didn't he?"

"B'leve he did, sir; or to some foreign parts. And Anne, as was under-chambermaid here: she went with him, fool as she was. They got theirselves married and went off, and he was well nigh as old as me. But seems he'd saved a little money, and that goes a long way with any girl."

"Was he the man who drove Mr. Soames that day the cheque was lost?" Mr. Toogood asked this question perhaps a little too abruptly. At any rate he obtained no answer to it. The waiter said he knew nothing of Mr. Soames, or the cheque, and the lawyer suspecting that the waiter was suspecting him, finished his brandy-and-water and went to bed.

Early on the following morning he observed that he was specially regarded by a shabby-looking man, dressed in black, but in a black suit that was very old, with a red nose, whom he had seen in the hotel on the preceding day; and he learned that this man was a cousin of the landlord,—one Dan Stringer,—who acted as a clerk in the hotel bar. He took an opportunity also of saying a word to Mr. Stringer the landlord,—whom he found to be a somewhat forlorn and gouty individual, seated on cushions in a little parlour behind the bar. After breakfast he went out, and having twice walked round the Cathedral Close and inspected the front of the palace and looked up at the windows of the prebendaries' houses, he knocked at the door of the deanery. The dean and Mrs. Arabin were on the Continent, he was told. Then he asked for Mr. Harding, having learned that Mr. Harding was Mrs. Arabin's father, and that he lived at the deanery. Mr. Harding was at home, but was not very well, the servant said. Mr. Toogood, however, persevered, sending up his card, and saying that he wished to have a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Harding on very particular business. He wrote a word upon his card before giving it to the servant,—"about Mr. Crawley." In a few minutes he was shown into the library, and had hardly time, while looking at the shelves, to remember what Mr. Crawley had said of his anger at the beautiful bindings, before an old man, very thin and very pale, shuffled into the room. He stooped a good deal, and his black clothes were very loose

about his shrunken limbs. He was not decrepit, nor did he seem to be one who had advanced to extreme old age; but yet he shuffled rather than walked, hardly raising his feet from the ground. Mr. Toogood, as he came forward to meet him, thought that he had never seen a sweeter face. There was very much melancholy in it, of that soft sadness of age which seems to acknowledge, and in some sort to regret, the waning oil of life; but the regret to be read in such faces has in it nothing of the bitterness of grief; there is no repining that the end has come, but simply a touch of sorrow that so much that is dear must be left behind. Mr. Harding shook hands with his visitor, and invited him to sit down, and then seated himself, folding his hands together over his knees, and he said a few words in a very low voice as to the absence of his daughter and of the dean.

"I hope you will excuse my troubling you," said Mr. Toogood.

"It is no trouble at all,—if I could be of any use. I don't know whether it is proper, but may I ask whether you call as—as—as a friend of Mr. Crawley's?"

"Altogether as a friend, Mr. Harding."

"I'm glad of that; though of course I am well aware that the gentlemen engaged on the prosecution must do their duty. Still,—I don't know,—somehow I would rather not hear them speak of this poor gentleman before the trial."

"You know Mr. Crawley, then?"

"Very slightly,—very slightly indeed. He is a gentleman not much given to social habits, and has been but seldom here. But he is an old friend whom my son-in-law loves dearly."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Mr. Harding. Perhaps before I go any further I ought to tell you that Mrs. Crawley and I are first-cousins."

"Oh, indeed. Then you are a friend."

"I never saw him in my life till a few days ago. He is very queer, you know,—very queer indeed. I'm a lawyer, Mr. Harding, practising in London;—an attorney that is." At each separate announcement Mr. Harding bowed, and when Toogood named his special branch of his profession Mr. Harding bowed lower than before, as though desirous of showing that he had great respect for attorneys. "And of course I'm anxious, if only out of respect for the family, that my wife's cousin should pull through this little difficulty, if possible."

"And for the sake of the poor man himself too, and for his wife, and his children;—and for the sake of the cloth."

"Exactly; taking it all together it's such a pity, you know. I think, Mr. Harding, he can hardly have intended to steal the money."

"I'm sure he did not."

"It's very hard to be sure of anybody, Mr. Harding;—very hard."

"I feel quite sure that he did not. He has been a most pious, hard-working clergyman. I cannot bring myself to think that he is guilty. What does the Latin proverb say? 'No one of a sudden becomes most base.'"

"But the temptation, Mr. Harding, was very strong. He was awfully badgered about his debts. That butcher in Silverbridge was playing the mischief with him."

"All the butchers in Barsetshire could not make an honest man steal money, and I think that Mr. Crawley is an honest man. You'll excuse me for being a little hot about one of my own order."

"Why; he is my cousin,—or rather, my wife's. But the fact is, Mr. Harding, we must get hold of the dean as soon as possible; and I'm going to send a gentleman after him."

"To send a gentleman after him?" said Mr. Harding, almost in dismay.

"Yes; I think that will be best."

"I'm afraid he'll have to go a long way, Mr. Toogood."

"The dean, I'm told, is in Jerusalem."

"I'm afraid he is, or on his journey there. He's to be there for the Easter week, and Sunday week will be Easter Sunday. But why should the gentleman want to go to Jerusalem after the dean?"

Then Mr. Toogood explained as well as he was able that the dean might have something to say on the subject which would serve Mr. Crawley's defence. "We shouldn't leave any stone unturned," said Mr. Toogood. "As far as I can judge, Crawley still thinks,—or half thinks,—that he got the cheque from your son-in-law." Mr. Harding shook his head sorrowfully. "I'm not saying he did, you know," continued Mr. Toogood. "I can't see myself how it is possible;—but still, we ought not to leave any stone unturned. And Mrs. Arabin,—can you tell me at all where we shall find her?"

"Has she anything to do with it, Mr. Toogood?"

"I can't quite say that she has, but it's just possible. As I said

before, Mr. Harding, we mustn't leave a stone unturned. They're not expected here till the end of April?"

"About the 25th or 26th, I think."

"And the assizes are the 28th. The judges come into the city on that day. It will be too late to wait till then. We must have our defence ready you know. Can you say where my friend will find Mrs. Arabin?"

Mr. Harding began nursing his knee, patting it and being very tender to it, as he sat meditating with his head on one side,—meditating not so much as to the nature of his answer as to that of the question. Could it be necessary that any emissary from a lawyer's office should be sent after his daughter? He did not like the idea of his Eleanor being disturbed by questions as to a theft. Though she had been twice married and had a son who was now nearly a man, still she was his Eleanor. But if it was necessary on Mr. Crawley's behalf, of course it must be done. "Her last address was at Paris, sir; but I think she has gone on to Florence. She has friends there, and she purposes to meet the dean at Venice on his return." Then Mr. Harding turned the table and wrote on a card his daughter's address.

"I suppose Mrs. Arabin must have heard of the affair?" said Mr. Toogood.

"She had not done so when she last wrote. I mentioned it to her the other day, before I knew that she had left Paris. If my letters and her sister's letters have been sent on to her, she must know it now."

Then Mr. Toogood got up to take his leave. "You will excuse me for troubling you, I hope, Mr. Harding."

"Oh, sir, pray do not mention that. It is no trouble, if one could only be of any service."

"One can always try to be of service. In these affairs so much is to be done by rummaging about, as I always call it. There have been many theatrical managers, you know, Mr. Harding, who have usually made up their pieces according to the dresses they have happened to have in their wardrobes."

"Have there, indeed, now? I never should have thought of that."

"And we lawyers have to do the same thing."

"Not with your clothes, Mr. Toogood?

"Not exactly with our clothes;—but with our information."

"I do not quite understand you, Mr. Toogood."

"In preparing a defence we have to rummage about and get up what we can. If we can't find anything that suits us exactly, we are obliged to use what we do find as well as we can. I remember, when I was a young man, an ostler was to be tried for stealing some oats in the Borough; and he did steal them too, and sold them at a rag-shop regularly. The evidence against him was as plain as a pike-staff. All I could find out was that on a certain day a horse had trod on the fellow's foot. So we put it to the jury whether the man could walk as far as the rag-shop with a bag of oats when he was dead-lame;—and we got him off."

"Did you though?" said Mr. Harding.

"Yes, we did."

"And he was guilty?"

"He had been at it regularly for months."

"Dear, dear, dear! Wouldn't it have been better to have had him punished for the fault,—gently; so as to warn him of the consequences of such doings?"

"Our business was to get him off,—and we got him off. It's my business to get my cousin's husband off, if I can, and we must do it, by hook or crook. It's a very difficult piece of work, because he won't let us employ a barrister. However, I shall have one in the court and say nothing to him about it at all. Good-bye, Mr. Harding. As you say, it would be a thousand pities that a clergyman should be convicted of a theft;—and one so well connected too."

Mr. Harding, when he was left alone, began to turn the matter over in his mind and to reflect whether the thousand pities of which Mr. Toogood had spoken appertained to the conviction of the criminal, or the doing of the crime. "If he did steal the money I suppose he ought to be punished, let him be ever so much a clergyman," said Mr. Harding to himself. But yet,—how terrible it would be! Of clergymen convicted of fraud in London he had often heard; but nothing of the kind had ever disgraced the diocese to which he belonged since he had known it. He could not teach himself to hope that Mr. Crawley should be acquitted if Mr. Crawley were guilty;—but he could teach himself to believe that Mr. Crawley was innocent. Something of a doubt had crept across his mind as he talked to the lawyer. Mr. Toogood, though Mrs. Crawley was his cousin, seemed to believe that the money had been stolen; and Mr. Toogood as a lawyer

ought to understand such matters better than an old secluded clergyman in Barchester. But, nevertheless, Mr. Toogood might be wrong; and Mr. Harding succeeded in satisfying himself at last that he could not be doing harm in thinking that Mr. Toogood was wrong. When he had made up his mind on this matter he sat down and wrote the following letter, which he addressed to his daughter at the post-office in Florence:—

"Deanery, March —, 186—.

"Dearest Nelly,—When I wrote on Tuesday I told you about poor Mr. Crawley, that he was the clergyman in Barsetshire of whose misfortune you read an account in Galignani's Messenger,—and I think Susan must have written about it also, because everybody here is talking of nothing else, and because, of course, we know how strong a regard the dean has for Mr. Crawley. But since that something has occurred which makes me write to you again,—at once. A gentleman has just been here, and has indeed only this moment left me, who tells me that he is an attorney in London, and that he is nearly related to Mrs. Crawley. He seems to be a very good-natured man, and I daresay he understands his business as a lawyer. His name is Toogood, and he has come down as he says to get evidence to help the poor gentleman on his trial. I cannot understand how this should be necessary, because it seems to me that the evidence should all be wanted on the other side. I cannot for a moment suppose that a clergyman and a gentleman such as Mr. Crawley should have stolen money, and if he is innocent I cannot understand why all this trouble should be necessary to prevent a jury finding him guilty.

"Mr. Toogood came here because he wanted to see the dean,—and you also. He did not explain, as far as I can remember, why he wanted to see you; but he said it would be necessary, and that he was going to send off a messenger to find you first, and the dean afterwards. It has something to do with the money which was given to Mr. Crawley last year, and which, if I remember right, was your present. But of course Mr. Toogood could not have known anything about that. However, I gave him the address, — poste restante, Florence,—and I daresay that somebody will make you out before long, if you are still stopping at Florence. I did not like letting him

go without telling you about it, as I thought that a lawyer's coming to you would startle you.

"The bairns are quite well, as I told you in my other letter, and Miss Jones says that little Elly is as good as gold. They are with me every morning and evening, and behave like darling angels, as they are. Posy is my own little jewel always. You may be quite sure I do nothing to spoil them.

"God bless you, dearest Nelly,

"Your most affectionate father,

"SEPTIMUS HARDING."

After this he wrote another letter to his other daughter, Mrs. Grantly, telling her also of Mr. Toogood's visit; and then he spent the remainder of the day thinking over the gravity of the occurrence. How terrible would it be if a beneficed clergyman in the diocese should really be found guilty of theft by a jury from the city! And then he had always heard so high a character of this man from his son-in-law. No, —it was impossible to believe that Mr. Crawley had in truth stolen a cheque for twenty pounds!

Mr. Toogood could get no other information in Barchester, and went on to Silverbridge early in the afternoon. He was half disposed to go by Hogglestock and look up his cousin, whom he had never seen, and his cousin's husband, upon whose business he was now intent; but on reflection he feared that he might do more harm than good. He had quite appreciated the fact that Mr. Crawley was not like other men. "The man's not above half-saved," he had said to his wife,—meaning thereby to insinuate that the poor clergyman was not in full possession of his wits. And, to tell the truth of Mr. Toogood, he was a little afraid of his relative. There was a something in Mr. Crawley's manner, in spite of his declared poverty, and in spite also of his extreme humility, which seemed to announce that he expected to be obeyed when he spoke on any point with authority. Mr. Toogood had not forgotten the tone in which Mr. Crawley had said to him, "Sir, this thing you cannot do." And he thought that, upon the whole, he had better not go to Hogglestock on this occasion.

When at Silverbridge, he began at once to "rummage about." His chief rummaging was to be done at Mr. Walker's table; but before

dinner he had time to call upon the magistrates' clerk, and ask a few questions as to the proceedings at the sitting from which Mr. Crawley was committed. He found a very taciturn old man, who was nearly as difficult to deal with in any rummaging process as a porcupine. But, nevertheless, at last he reached a state of conversation which was not absolutely hostile. Mr. Toogood pleaded that he was the poor man's cousin,—pleaded that, as the family lawyer, he was naturally the poor man's protector at such a time as the present,—pleaded also that as the poor man was so very poor, no one else could come forward on his behalf,—and in this way somewhat softened the hard sharpness of the old porcupine's quills. But after all this, there was very little to be learned from the old porcupine. "There was not a magistrate on the bench," he said, "who had any doubt that the evidence was sufficient to justify them in sending the case to the assizes. They had all regretted," —the porcupine said in his softest moment,—"that the gentleman had come there without a legal adviser." "Ah, that's been the mischief of it all!" said Mr. Toogood, dashing his hand against the porcupine's mahogany table. "But the facts were so strong, Mr. Toogood!" "Nobody there to soften 'em down, you know," said Mr. Toogood, shaking his head. Very little more than this was learned from the porcupine; and then Mr. Toogood went away, and prepared for Mr. Walker's dinner.

Mr. Walker had invited Dr. Tempest and Miss Anne Prettyman and Major Grantly to meet Mr. Toogood, and had explained, in a manner intended to be half earnest and half jocose, that though Mr. Toogood was an attorney, like himself, and was at this moment engaged in a noble way on behalf of his cousin's husband, without any idea of receiving back even the money which he would be out of pocket; still he wasn't quite,—not quite, you know—"not quite so much of a gentleman as I am,"—Mr. Walker would have said, had he spoken out freely that which he insinuated. But he contented himself with the emphasis he put upon the "not quite," which expressed his meaning fully. And Mr. Walker was correct in his opinion of Mr. Toogood. As regards the two attorneys I will not venture to say that either of them was not a "perfect gentleman." A perfect gentleman is a thing which I cannot define. But undoubtedly Mr. Walker was a bigger man in his way than was Mr. Toogood in his, and did habitually consort in the county

of Barsetshire with men of higher standing than those with whom Mr. Toogood associated in London.

It seemed to be understood that Mr. Crawley was to be the general subject of conversation, and no one attempted to talk about anything else. Indeed, at this time, very little else was talked about in that part of the county;—not only because of the interest naturally attaching to the question of the suspected guilt of a parish clergyman, but because much had become lately known of Mr. Crawley's character, and because it was known also that an internecine feud had arisen between him and the bishop. It had undoubtedly become the general opinion that Mr. Crawley had picked up and used a cheque which was not his own;—that he had, in fact, stolen it; but there was, in spite of that belief, a general wish that he might be acquitted and left in his living. And when the tidings of Mr. Crawley's victory over the bishop at the palace had become bruited about, popular sympathy went with the victor. The theft was, as it were, condoned, and people made excuses which were not always rational, but which were founded on the instincts of true humanity. And now the tidings of another stage in the battle, as fought against Mr. Crawley by the bishop, had gone forth through the county, and men had heard that the rural dean was to be instructed to make inquiries which should be preliminary to proceedings against Mr. Crawley in an ecclesiastical court. Dr. Tempest, who was now about to meet Mr. Toogood at Mr. Walker's, was the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley would have to submit himself in any such inquiry; but Dr. Tempest had not as yet received from the bishop any official order on the subject.

"We are so delighted to think that you have taken up your cousin's case," said Mrs. Walker to Mr. Toogood, almost in a whisper.

"He is not just my cousin, himself," said Mr. Toogood, "but of course it's all the same thing. And as to taking up his case, you see, my dear madam, he won't let me take it up."

"I thought you had. I thought you were down here about it?"

"Only on the sly, Mrs. Walker. He has such queer ideas that he will not allow a lawyer to be properly employed; and you can't conceive how hard that makes it. Do you know him, Mrs. Walker?"

"We know his daughter Grace." And then Mrs. Walker whispered something further, which we may presume to have been an intimation

that the gentleman opposite,—Major Grantly,—was supposed by some people to be very fond of Miss Grace Crawley.

"Quite a child, isn't she?" said Toogood, whose own daughter, now about to be married, was three or four years older than Grace.

"She's beyond being a child, I think. Of course she is young."

"But I suppose this affair will knock all that on the head," said the lawyer.

"I do not know how that may be; but they do say he is very much attached to her. The major is a man of family, and of course it would be very disagreeable if Mr. Crawley were found guilty."

"Very disagreeable, indeed; but, upon my word, Mrs. Walker, I don't know what to say about it."

"You think it will go against him, Mr. Toogood?" Mr. Toogood shook his head, and, on seeing this, Mrs. Walker sighed deeply.

"I can only say that I have heard nothing from the bishop as yet," said Dr. Tempest, after the ladies had left the room. "Of course, if he thinks well to order it, the inquiry must be made."

"But how long would it take?" asked Mr. Walker.

"Three months, I should think,—or perhaps more. Of course Crawley would do all that he could to delay us, and I am not at all sure that we should be in any very great hurry ourselves."

"Who are the 'we,' doctor?" said Mr. Walker.

"I cannot make such an inquiry by myself, you know. I suppose the bishop would ask me to select two or four other clergymen to act with me. That's the usual way of doing it. But you may be quite sure of this, Walker; the assizes will be over, and the jury have found their verdict long before we have settled our preliminaries."

"And what will be the good of your going on after that?"

"Only this good:—if the unfortunate man be convicted——"

"Which he won't," said Mr. Toogood, who thought it expedient to put on a bolder front in talking of the matter to the rural dean, than he had assumed in his whispered conversation with Mrs. Walker.

"I hope not, with all my heart," said the doctor. "But, perhaps, for the sake of the argument, the supposition may be allowed to pass."

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Toogood. "For the sake of the argument, it may pass."

"If he be convicted, then, I suppose, there will be an end of the question. He would be sentenced for not less, I should say, than twelve months; and after that——"

"And would be as good a parson of Hogglestock when he came out of prison as when he went in," said Mr. Walker. "The conviction and judgment in a civil court would not touch his temporality."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Toogood.

"Of course not," said the doctor. "We all know that; and in the event of Mr. Crawley coming back to his parish it would be open to the bishop to raise the question as to his fitness for the duties."

"Why shouldn't he be as fit as any one else?" said Mr. Toogood.

"Simply because he would have been found to be a thief," said the doctor. "You must excuse me, Mr. Toogood, but it's only for the sake of the argument."

"I don't see what that has to do with it," said Mr. Toogood. "He would have undergone his penalty."

"It is preferable that a man who preaches from a pulpit should not have undergone such a penalty," said the doctor. "But in practice, under such circumstances,—which we none of us anticipate, Mr. Toogood,—the living should no doubt be vacated. Mr. Crawley would probably hardly wish to come back. The jury will do their work before we can do ours,—will do it on a much better base than any we can have; and, when they have done it, the thing ought to be finished. If the jury acquit him, the bishop cannot proceed any further. If he be found guilty I think that the resignation of the living must follow."

"It is all spite, then, on the bishop's part?" said the major.

"Not at all," said the doctor. "The poor man is weak; that is all. He is driven to persecute because he cannot escape persecution himself. But it may really be a question whether his present proceeding is not right. If I were bishop I should wait till the trial was over; that is all."

From this and from much more that was said during the evening on the same subject Mr. Toogood gradually learned the position which Mr. Crawley and the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt really held in the county, and he returned to town resolved to go on with the case.

"I'll have a barrister down express, and I'll defend him in his own

teeth," he said to his wife. "There'll be a scene in court, I daresay, and the man will call upon his own counsel to hold his tongue and shut up his brief; and, as far as I can see, counsel in such a case would have no alternative. But there would come an explanation,—how Crawley was too honourable to employ a man whom he could not pay, and there would be a romance, and it would all go down with the jury. One wants sympathy in such a case as that;—not evidence."

"And how much will it cost, Tom?" said Maria, dolefully.

"Only a trifle. We won't think of that yet. There's John Eames is going all the way to Jerusalem, out of his pocket."

"But Johnny hasn't got twelve children, Tom."

"One doesn't have a cousin in trouble every day," said Toogood. "And then you see there's something very pretty in the case. It's quite a pleasure getting it up."

CHAPTER XLIII.

MR. CROSBIE GOES INTO THE CITY.

"I've known the City now for more than ten years, Mr. Crosbie, and I never knew money to be so tight as it is at this moment. The best commercial bills going can't be done under nine, and any other kind of paper can't so much as get itself looked at." Thus spoke Mr. Musselboro. He was seated in Dobbs Broughton's arm-chair in Dobbs Broughton's room in Hook Court, on the hind legs of which he was balancing himself comfortably; and he was communicating his experience in City matters to our old friend, Adolphus Crosbie,—of whom we may surmise that he would not have been there, at that moment, in Hook Court, if things had been going well with him. It was now past

eleven o'clock, and he should have been at his office at the West End. His position in his office was no doubt high enough to place him beyond the reach of any special inquiry as to such absences; but it is generally felt that when the Crosbies of the West End have calls into the City about noon, things in the world are not going well with them. The man who goes into the City to look for money is generally one who does not know where to get money when he wants it. Mr. Musselboro on this occasion kept his hat on his head, and there was something in the way in which he balanced his chair which was in itself an offence to Mr. Crosbie's personal dignity. It was hardly as yet two months since Mr. Dobbs Broughton had assured him in that very room that there need not be the slightest anxiety about his bill. Of course it could be renewed,—the commission being duly paid. As Mr. Dobbs Broughton explained on that occasion, that was his business. There was nothing he liked so much as renewing bills for such customers as Mr. Crosbie; and he was very candid at that meeting, explaining how he did this branch of his business, raising money on his own credit at four or five per cent., and lending it on his own judgment at eight or nine. Mr. Crosbie did not feel himself then called upon to exclaim that what he was called upon to pay was about twelve, perfectly understanding the comfort and grace of euphony; but he had turned it over in his mind, considering whether twelve per cent. was not more than he ought to be mulcted for the accommodation he wanted. Now, at the moment, he would have been glad to get it from Mr. Musselboro, without further words, for twenty.

Things had much changed with Adolphus Crosbie when he was driven to make morning visits to such a one as Mr. Musselboro with the view of having a bill renewed for two hundred and fifty pounds. In his early life he had always had the merit of being a careful man as to money. In some other respects he had gone astray very foolishly, —as has been partly explained in our earlier chapters; but up to the date of his marriage with Lady Alexandrina De Courcy he had never had dealings in Hook Court or in any such locality. Money troubles had then come upon him. Lady Alexandrina, being the daughter of a countess, had high ideas; and when, very shortly after his marriage, he had submitted to a separation from his noble wife, he had found himself and his income to be tied up inextricably in the hands of one Mr.

Mortimer Gazebee, a lawyer who had married one of his wife's sisters. It was not that Mr. Gazebee was dishonest; nor did Crosbie suspect him of dishonesty; but the lawyer was so wedded to the interest of the noble family with which he was connected, that he worked for them all as an inferior spider might be supposed to work, which, from the infirmity of its nature, was compelled by its instincts to be catching flies always for superior spiders. Mr. Mortimer Gazebee had in this way entangled Mr. Crosbie in his web on behalf of those noble spiders, the De Courcys, and our poor friend, in his endeavour to fight his way through the web, had fallen into the hands of the Hook Court firm of Mrs. Van Siever, Dobbs Broughton, and Musselboro.

"Mr. Broughton told me when I was last here," said Crosbie, "that there would be no difficulty about it."

"And it was renewed then; wasn't it?"

"Of course it was,—for two months. But he was speaking of a continuation of renewal."

"I'm afraid we can't do it, Mr. Crosbie. I'm afraid we can't, indeed. Money is so awful tight."

"Of course I must pay what you choose to charge me."

"It isn't that, Mr. Crosbie. The bill is out for collection, and must be collected. In times like these we must draw ourselves in a little, you know. Two hundred and fifty pounds isn't a great deal of money, you will say; but every little helps, you know; and, besides, of course we go upon a system. Business is business, and must not be made pleasure of. I should have had a great deal of pleasure in doing this for you, but it can't be done in the way of business."

"When will Broughton be here?"

"He may be in at any time;—I can't say when. I suppose he's down at the court now."

"What court?"

"Capel Court."

"I suppose I can see him there?" said Crosbie.

"If you catch him you can see him, of course. But what good will that do you, Mr. Crosbie? I tell you that we can't do it for you. If Broughton was here this moment it couldn't make the slightest difference."

Now Mr. Crosbie had an idea that Mr. Musselboro, though he sat in

Dobbs Broughton's seat and kept on his hat, and balanced his chair on two legs, was in truth nothing more than a clerk. He did not quite understand the manner in which the affairs of the establishment were worked, though he had been informed that Mrs. Van Siever was one of the partners. That Dobbs Broughton was the managing man, who really did the business, he was convinced; and he did not therefore like to be answered peremptorily by such a one as Musselboro. "I should wish to see Mr. Broughton," he said.

"You can call again,—or you can go down to the court if you like it. But you may take this as an answer from me, that the bill can't be renewed by us." At this moment the door of the room was opened, and Dobbs Broughton himself came into it. His face was not at all pleasant, and any one might have seen with half an eye that the money-market was a great deal tighter than he liked it to be. "Here is Mr. Crosbie here,—about that bill," said Musselboro.

"Mr. Crosbie must take up his bill; that's all," said Dobbs Broughton.

"But it doesn't suit me to take it up," said Crosbie.

"Then you must take it up without suiting you," said Dobbs Broughton.

It might have been seen, I said, with half an eye, that Mr. Broughton did not like the state of the money-market; and it might also be seen with the other half that he had been endeavouring to mitigate the bitterness of his dislike by alcoholic aid. Musselboro at once perceived that his patron and partner was half drunk, and Crosbie was aware that he had been drinking. But, nevertheless, it was necessary that something more should be said. The bill would be due to-morrow,—was payable at Crosbie's bankers'; and, as Mr. Crosbie too well knew, there were no funds there for the purpose. And there were other purposes, very needful, for which Mr. Crosbie's funds were at the present moment unfortunately by no means sufficient. He stood for a few moments thinking what he would do;—whether he would leave the drunken man and his office and let the bill take its chance, or whether he would make one more effort for an arrangement. He did not for a moment believe that Broughton himself was subject to any pecuniary difficulty. Broughton lived in a big house, as rich men live, and had a name for commercial success. It never occurred to Crosbie that it was a matter of great moment to Dobbs Broughton

himself that the bill should be taken up. Crosbie still thought that Musselboro was his special enemy, and that Broughton had joined Musselboro in his hostility simply because he was too drunk to know better. "You might, at any rate, answer me civilly, Mr. Broughton," he said.

"I know nothing about civility with things as they are at present," said Broughton. "Civil by——! There's nothing so civil as paying money when you owe it. Musselboro, reach me down the decanter and some glasses. Perhaps Mr. Crosbie will wet his whistle."

"He don't want any wine,—nor you either," said Musselboro.

"What's up now?" said Broughton, staggering across the room towards a cupboard, in which it was his custom to keep a provision of that comfort which he needed at the present moment. "I suppose I may stand a glass of wine to a fellow in my own room, if I like it."

"I will take no wine, thank you," said Crosbie.

"Then you can do the other thing. When I ask a gentleman to take a glass of wine, there is no compulsion. But about the bill there is compulsion. Do you understand that? You may drink, or let it alone; but pay you must. Why, Mussy, what d'ye think?—There's Carter, Ricketts and Carter;—I'm blessed if Carter just now didn't beg for two months, as though two months would be all the world to him, and that for a trumpery five hundred pounds. I never saw money like it is now; never." To this appeal, Musselboro made no reply, not caring, perhaps, at the present moment to sustain his partner. He still balanced himself in his chair, and still kept his hat on his head. Even Mr. Crosbie began to perceive that Mr. Musselboro's genius was in the ascendant in Hook Court.

"I can hardly believe," said Crosbie, "that things can be so bad that I cannot have a bill for two hundred and fifty pounds renewed when I am willing to pay for the accommodation. I have not done much in the way of bills, but I never had one dishonoured yet."

"Don't let this be the first," said Dobbs Broughton.

"Not if I can prevent it," said Crosbie. "But, to tell you the truth, Mr. Broughton, my bill will be dishonoured unless I can have it renewed. If it does not suit you to do it, I suppose you can recommend me to some one who can make it convenient."

"Why don't you go to your bankers?" said Musselboro.

"I never did ask my bankers for anything of the kind."

"Then you should try what your credit with them is worth," said Broughton. "It isn't worth much here, as you can perceive. Ha, ha, ha!"

Crosbie, when he heard this, became very angry; and Musselboro, perceiving this, got out of his chair, so that he might be in readiness to prevent any violence, if violence were attempted. "It really is no good you're staying here," he said. "You see that Broughton has been drinking. There's no knowing what he may say or do."

"You be blowed," said Broughton, who had taken the arm-chair as soon as Musselboro had left it.

"But you may believe me in the way of business," continued Musselboro, "when I tell you that it really does not suit us to renew the bill. We're pressed ourselves, and we must press others."

"And who will do it for me?" said Crosbie, almost in despair.

"There are Burton and Bangles there, the wine-merchants down in the yard; perhaps they may accommodate you. It's all in their line; but I'm told they charge uncommon dear."

"I don't know Messrs. Burton and Bangles," said Crosbie.

"That needn't stand in your way. You tell them where you come from, and they'll make inquiry. If they think it's about right, they'll give you the money; and if they don't, they won't."

Mr. Crosbie then left the office without exchanging another word with Dobbs Broughton, and went down into Hook Court. As he descended the stairs he turned over in his mind the propriety of going to Messrs. Burton and Bangles with the view of relieving himself from his present difficulty. He knew that it was ruinous. Dealings even with such men as Dobbs Broughton and Musselboro, whom he presumed to be milder in their greed than Burton and Bangles, were, all of them, steps on the road to ruin. But what was he to do? If his bill were dishonoured, the fact would certainly become known at his office, and he might even ultimately be arrested. In the door-way at the bottom of the stairs he stood for some moments, looking over at Burton and Bangles', and he did not at all like the aspect of the establishment. Inside the office he could see a man standing with a cigar in his mouth, very resplendent with a new hat,—with a hat remarkable for the bold upward curve of its rim, and this man was copiously

decorated with a chain and seals hanging about widely over his waistcoat. He was leaning with his back against the counter, and was talking to some one on the other side of it. There was something in the man's look and manner that was utterly repulsive to Crosbie. He was more vulgar to the eye even than Musselboro, and his voice, which Crosbie could hear as he stood in the other doorway, was almost as detestable as that of Dobbs Broughton in his drunkenness. Crosbie did not doubt that this was either Burton or Bangles, and that the man standing inside was either Bangles or Burton. He could not bring himself to accost these men and tell them of his necessities, and propose to them that they should relieve him. In spite of what Musselboro had just said to him, he could not believe it possible that he should succeed, were he to do so without some introduction. So he left Hook Court and went out into the lane, hearing as he went the loud voice of the man with the turned-up hat and the chain.

But what was he to do? At the outset of his pecuniary troubles, when he first found it necessary to litigate some question with the De Courcy people, and withstand the web which Mortimer Gazebee wove so assiduously, his own attorney had introduced him to Dobbs Broughton, and the assistance which he had needed had come to him, at any rate, without trouble. He did not especially like Mr. Broughton; and when Mr. Broughton first invited him to come and eat a little bit of dinner, he had told himself with painful remorse that in his early days he had been accustomed to eat his little bits of dinner with people of a different kind. But there had been nothing really painful in this. Since his marriage with a daughter of the De Courcys,—by which marriage he had intended to climb to the highest pinnacle of social eating and drinking,—he had gradually found himself to be falling in the scale of such matters, and could bring himself to dine with a Dobbs Broughton without any violent pain. But now he had fallen so low that Dobbs Broughton had insulted him, and he was in such distress that he did not know where to turn for ten pounds. Mr. Gazebee had beaten him at litigation, and his own lawyer had advised him that it would be foolish to try the matter further. In his marriage with the noble daughter of the De Courcys he had allowed the framers of the De Courcy settlement to tie him up in such a way that now, even when chance had done so much for him in freeing him from his wife,

he was still bound to the De Courcy faction. Money had been paid away,—on his behalf, as alleged by Mr. Gazebee,—like running water; money for furniture, money for the lease of a house, money when he had been separated from his wife, money while she was living abroad. It had seemed to him that he had been made to pay for the entire support of the female moiety of the De Courcy family which had settled itself at Baden-Baden, from the day, and in some respects from before the day, on which his wife had joined that moiety. He had done all in his power to struggle against these payments, but every such struggle had only cost him more money. Mr. Gazebee had written to him the civilest notes; but every note seemed to cost him money,—every word of each note seemed to find its way into some bill. His wife had died and her body had been brought back, with all the pomp befitting the body of an earl's daughter, that it might be laid with the old De Courcy dust,—at his expense. The embalming of her dear remains had cost a wondrous sum, and was a terrible blow upon him. All these items were showered upon him by Mr. Gazebee with the most courteously worded demands for settlement as soon as convenient. And then, when he applied that Lady Alexandrina's small fortune should be made over to him,—according to a certain agreement under which he had made over all his possessions to his wife, should she have survived him,—Mr. Gazebee expressed a mild opinion that he was wrong in his law, and blandly recommended an amicable lawsuit. The amicable lawsuit was carried on. His own lawyer seemed to throw him over. Mr. Gazebee was successful in everything. No money came to him. Money was demanded from him on old scores and on new scores,—and all that he received to console him for what he had lost was a mourning-ring with his wife's hair,—for which, with sundry other mourning-rings, he had to pay,—and an introduction to Mr. Dobbs Broughton. To Mr. Dobbs Broughton he owed five hundred pounds; and as regarded a bill for the one-half of that sum which was due to-morrow, Mr. Dobbs Broughton had refused to grant him renewal for a single month!

I know no more uncomfortable walking than that which falls to the lot of men who go into the City to look for money, and who find none. Of all the lost steps trodden by men, surely the steps lost after that fashion are the most melancholy. It is not only that they are so vain,

but that they are accompanied by so killing a sense of shame! To wait about in dingy rooms, which look on to bare walls, and are approached through some Hook Court; or to keep appointments at a low coffee-house, to which trystings the money-lender will not trouble himself to come unless it pleases him; to be civil, almost suppliant, to a cunning knave whom the borrower loathes; to be refused thrice, and then cheated with his eyes open on the fourth attempt; to submit himself to vulgarity of the foulest kind, and to have to seem to like it; to be badgered, reviled, and at last accused of want of honesty by the most fraudulent of mankind; and at the same time to be clearly conscious of the ruin that is coming,—this is the fate of him who goes into the City to find money, not knowing where it is to be found!

Crosbie went along the lane into Lombard Street, and then he stood still for a moment to think. Though he knew a good deal of affairs in general, he did not quite know what would happen to him if his bill should be dishonoured. That somebody would bring it to him noted, and require him instantly to put his hand into his pocket and bring out the amount of the bill, plus the amount of certain expenses, he thought that he did know. And he knew that were he in trade he would become a bankrupt; and he was well aware that such an occurrence would prove him to be insolvent. But he did not know what his creditors would immediately have the power of doing. That the fact of the bill having been dishonoured would reach the Board under which he served,—and, therefore, also the fact that he had had recourse to such bill transactions,—this alone was enough to fill him with dismay. In early life he had carried his head so high, he had been so much more than a mere Government clerk, that the idea of the coming disgrace almost killed him. Would it not be well that he should put an end to himself, and thus escape? What was there in the world now for which it was worth his while to live? Lily, whom he had once gained, and by that gain had placed himself high in all hopes of happiness and riches,—whom he had then thrown away from him, and who had again seemed to be almost within his reach,—Lily had so refused him that he knew not how to approach her with a further prayer. And, had she not refused him, how could he have told her of his load of debt? As he stood at the corner where the lane runs into Lombard Street, he came for a while to think almost more of Lily

than of his rejected bill. Then, as he thought of both his misfortunes together, he asked himself whether a pistol would not conveniently put an end to them together.

At that moment a loud, harsh voice greeted his ear. "Hallo, Crosbie, what brings you so far east? One does not often see you in the City." It was the voice of Sir Raffle Buffle, which in former days had been very odious to Crosbie's ears;—for Sir Raffle Buffle had once been the presiding genius of the office to which Crosbie still belonged.

"No, indeed, not very often," said Crosbie, smiling. Who can tell, who has not felt it, the pain that goes to the forcing of such smiles? But Sir Raffle was not an acutely observant person, and did not see that anything was wrong.

"I suppose you're doing a little business?" said Sir Raffle. "If a man has kept a trifle of money by him, this certainly is the time for turning it. You have always been wide awake about such things."

"No, indeed," said Crosbie. If he could only make up his mind that he would shoot himself, would it not be a pleasant thing to inflict some condign punishment on this odious man before he left the world? But Crosbie knew that he was not going to shoot himself, and he knew also that he had no power of inflicting condign punishment on Sir Raffle Buffle. He could only hate the man, and curse him inwardly.

"Ah, ha!" said Sir Raffle. "You wouldn't be here unless you knew where a good thing is to be picked up. But I must be off. I'm on the Rocky Mountain Canal Company Directory. I'm not above taking my two guineas a day. Good-bye, my boy. Remember me to old Optimist." And so Sir Raffle passed on, leaving Crosbie still standing at the corner of the lane.

What was he to do? This interruption had at least seemed to drive Lily from his mind, and to send his ideas back to the consideration of his pecuniary difficulties. He thought of his own bank, a West-End establishment at which he was personally known to many of the clerks, and where he had been heretofore treated with great consideration. But of late his balances had been very low, and more than once he had been reminded that he had overdrawn his account. He knew well that the distinguished firm of Bounce, Bounce, and Bounce would not cash

a bill for him or lend him money without security. He did not even dare to ask them to do so.

On a sudden he jumped into a cab, and was driven back to his office. A thought had come upon him. He would throw himself upon the kindness of a friend there. Hitherto he had contrived to hold his head so high above the clerks below him, so high before the Commissioners who were above him, that none there suspected him to be a man in difficulty. It not seldom happens that a man's character stands too high for his interest,—so high that it cannot be maintained, and so high that any fall will be dangerous. And so it was with Crosbie and his character at the General Committee Office. The man to whom he was now thinking of applying as his friend, was a certain Mr. Butterwell, who had been his predecessor in the secretary's chair, and who now filled the less onerous but more dignified position of a Commissioner. Mr. Crosbie had somewhat despised Mr. Butterwell, and had of late years not been averse to showing that he did so. He had snubbed Mr. Butterwell, and Mr. Butterwell, driven to his wit's ends, had tried a fall or two with him. In all these struggles Crosbie had had the best of it, and Butterwell had gone to the wall. Nevertheless, for the sake of official decency, and from certain wise remembrances of the sources of official comfort and official discomfort, Mr. Butterwell had always maintained a show of outward friendship with the secretary. They smiled and were gracious, called each other Butterwell and Crosbie, and abstained from all cat-and-dog absurdities. Nevertheless, it was the frequently expressed opinion of every clerk in the office that Mr. Butterwell hated Mr. Crosbie like poison. This was the man to whom Crosbie suddenly made up his mind that he would have recourse.

As he was driven back to his office he resolved that he would make a plunge at once at the difficulty. He knew that Butterwell was fairly rich, and he knew also that he was good-natured,—with that sort of sleepy good-nature which is not active for philanthropic purposes, but which dislikes to incur the pain of refusing. And then Mr. Butterwell was nervous, and if the thing was managed well, he might be cheated out of an assent, before time had been given him in which to pluck up courage for refusing. But Crosbie doubted his own courage also,—fearing that if he gave himself time for hesitation he would

hesitate, and that, hesitating, he would feel the terrible disgrace of the thing and not do it. So, without going to his own desk, or ridding himself of his hat, he went at once to Butterwell's room. When he opened the door, he found Mr. Butterwell alone, reading The Times. "Butterwell," said he, beginning to speak before he had even closed the door, "I have come to you in great distress. I wonder whether you can help me; I want you to lend me five hundred pounds? It must be for not less than three months."

Mr. Butterwell dropped the paper from his hands, and stared at the secretary over his spectacles.

END OF VOL. I.

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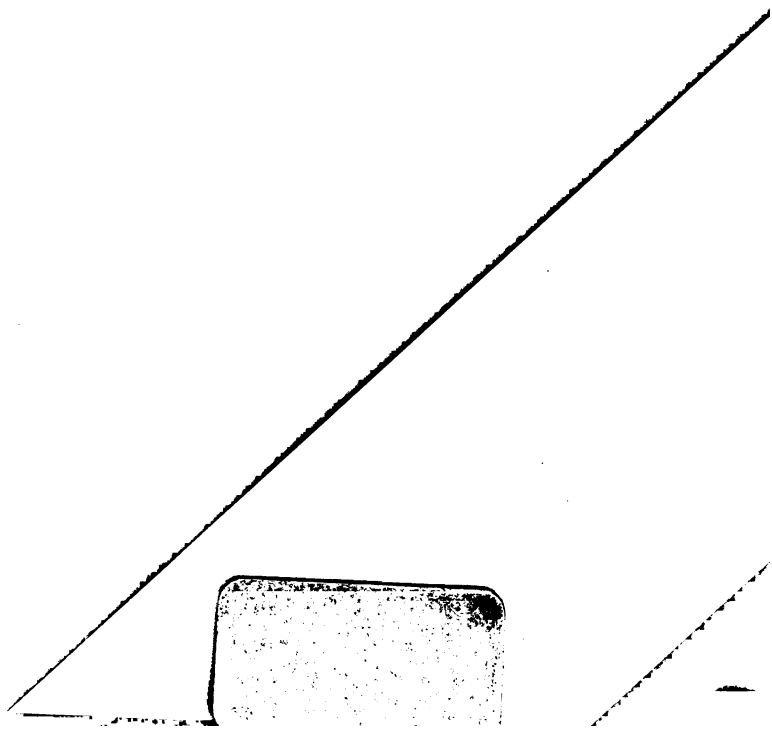
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